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The TRUMP Voter Conundrum

Can Democrats chip away the president's supporters—and not compromise their values?

By
Tana Ganeva

FEBRUARY 17, 2020
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Letters

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LOVE AND ROCKETS | CAPITALISM VS. DEMOCRACY
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Meet the Boy Scouts of the Border Patrol

Failing College

Re "The Loser President" by John Nichols [February 3]: Opponents of the Electoral College should take on the common myth that the institution was set up to protect states with small populations from the tyranny of bigger ones. I do not find any such assertion in documents from the nation's founders. What I do find is a passage by Alexander Hamilton (in *The Federalist Papers*, No. 68) demonstrating that the Electoral College was instituted precisely to fix the problems we encountered in 2016. The founders anticipated that the public might be persuaded to choose a corrupt candidate and, in particular, that the electoral process could be captured by a foreign power. For the Electoral College to face the exact situation it was designed to address and then blow its chance removes any shred of justification to continue that process.

Andrew Oram
Arlington, Mass.

East Coast Vibes

I am dismayed by Robert L. Borosage's description of Donald Trump's behavior in "The Way Out" [February 3] as that of a "spoiled, delinquent teenager." Sociopathic behavior has no particular age limit, and it would have been equally possible (and equally undesirable) to find an illustration from Trump's age group. In an era in which young people—and frequently those even younger than teens—are speaking out clearly about the failures of the established powers to deal with the climate crisis and social issues, it is painful to see such a stereotype.

In the same issue, Rebecca Zweig's "Organize and They Will Come" also manages to convey an attitude of condescension toward Iowa and the Midwest more broadly through the inclusion of words and descriptions like "Iowa nice" "steak fries," and the "outsize" importance of the Iowa caucuses.

If *The Nation* is looking only for East Coast readers above the age of 50, keep it up. You're doing great.

Amrita Burdick
Kansas City, Mo.

The Beginning of Understanding

💬 Re Arundhati Roy's "India: Portents of an Ending" [January 13/20]: This is an amazing overview of India's recent history. Thanks for the crash course in what could become another global disaster area, if it hasn't already. Most of us in the West are pretty ignorant about what is happening, culturally and politically, on the other side of the world. That's certainly true for India's history. Joanne Simson

💬 I do not believe [President Trump and others] are ignorant of what Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has done. Trump and Modi are both empowering and enabling each other. Modi adapted his own reelection slogan in Houston, calling for his Indian audience to support the reelection of "Trump *sarkar*!" Yezdyar Kaoosji

More Than Words

I know the letters that *The Nation* receives comment mostly on the articles, but I wanted instead to compliment the unnamed artist who created the picture that accompanied Michael T. Klare's article "Twin Threats" in the January 27 issue. The polar bear on the bomb looking like the tip of an iceberg was perfect in capturing the concept of the twin threats—climate change and nuclear arms—facing the world. Well done!

Carl Nye
Cottonwood, Ariz.

[Editor's note: The unnamed artist was none other than The Nation*'s own multitalented creative director, Robert Best.]*

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A Winning Ticket

The corporate media have been eagerly predicting an outbreak of hostilities between Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren for months. Last summer, when *The New York Times* argued that the two candidates were “jockeying for the same cohort of left-leaning voters and donors,” both were polling well behind Joe Biden. Biden remains in the lead, but since then, the two progressive champions have so consistently owned the ideas primary that proposals once dismissed as fringe notions—from Medicare for All to a wealth tax to student debt relief—have been forced onto the 2020 agenda. Even Biden, a deficit hawk who spent much of the 1980s and ’90s arguing for “entitlement reform,” now runs away from his own record supporting cuts to Social Security.

So when, in mid-January, the truce between the two finally seemed to break down, many were quick to fan the flames. After all, everybody knows only one of them can win.

But what if that isn’t true? What if we could have both? Sanders’s courage and consistency and deep understanding of what a rigged system does to the lives of the people it runs over and brands as failures. And Warren’s policy chops and personal warmth and cold intellectual fury at the same bankers and billionaires and predatory monopolists targeted by her rival.

The conventional wisdom says presidential tickets have to be balanced—geographically, politically, and ideally by race and gender. That’s the logic that gives rise to talk of a Warren-Castro or Sanders-Harris ticket (or, for those with more moderate sympathies, Biden-Abrams). That’s also the logic that produced McCain-Palin and Clinton-Kaine. And while no Democrat can win without the wholehearted support of African American voters, what most of those voters say they want is someone who can beat Trump. So maybe it’s time to consider whether the two candidates—who together dominate the Democratic field and who, though they overlap considerably in their beliefs, appeal to different constituencies—should formally join forces.

How would that work? Warren and Sanders would agree not only to end hostilities, as called for in the unity statement issued last month by several national progressive organizations, but also to campaign as a team. Each would be free to highlight areas where they differ: on the timetable for getting to Medicare for All, on the US-Mexico-Canada trade agreement, on whether democratic socialism or regulated capitalism is the best route to a just economy. But they’d agree to direct their fire outward. And they’d agree that whoever had the most delegates at the end of the primaries would head the ticket, nominating the other as vice president. (Or they’d be free to make other arrangements, subject to agreement.)

Among its other advantages, this approach ensures both candidates would remain in the race until the final primaries on June 2. That’s essential, because the delegate math is clear: If, as now seems likely, three candidates finish with 15 percent of the vote, none would have the nearly 2,000 delegates required to win on the first ballot. That would hand the decision to some 750 unelected delegates appointed by Tom Perez and the Democratic National Committee. (Perez’s latest appointments to the rules committee have shown him to be no friend to progressive Democrats.)

A progressive unity ticket may be utopian, but it need not be a fantasy. Corporate Democrats might not like the result, but after lecturing the left about the importance of party unity for decades, they’ll just have to practice what they’ve preached.

Keeping the nomination in the hands of democratically elected delegates offers the best—perhaps the only—strategy for avoiding the weakened ticket and centrist candidate likely to emerge from a second ballot or a brokered convention. A ticket that combines the Sanders campaign’s emphasis on expanding the electorate and the Warren campaign’s emphasis on party unity has the potential to both defeat Donald Trump and deliver fundamental change.

D.D. GUTTENPLAN

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FEBRUARY 17, 2020

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MINZAYAR / REUTERS

BY THE NUMBERS

70K

Children born into statelessness each year

12M

Potentially stateless people in the world, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees

218K

US residents who are "potentially stateless or potentially at risk of statelessness," according to a new estimate from the Center for Migration Studies

45%

Percentage of potentially stateless people or those potentially at risk of statelessness who have come to the US in the last five years—many from Nepal, Bhutan, Thailand, and Myanmar

$17.6K

Average annual income of a potentially stateless person in the United States

—Emily Berch

COMMENT

Staying Put

Donald Trump isn't the only lawless Republican.

In December an independent investigation determined that Matt Shea committed domestic terrorism and produced a pamphlet that advocated for a Christian theocracy and the "killing of all males who do not agree." Forty-three days later, he took his seat as an elected representative on the floor of the Washington State Legislature.

The actual seat was different from his old one. The GOP leadership moved Shea to the back of the chamber, barred him from the party's caucus and committees, and removed his name and contact information from the House Republicans' website. But on January 13, there he was in a suit and red tie, ready to vote. The legislator, who has represented the Spokane area in eastern Washington since 2009, has refused to resign and is even discussing his 2020 reelection plans. The state House needs the votes of at least two-thirds of its members for expulsion. While Republicans may not want to sit next to him, it is extremely unlikely that nine or more of them would vote to unseat him.

That's probably because Shea is as popular as ever with his far-right base. Among the state's Republican candidates, he ranks second in the number of individual donors listed, behind only the House minority leader, according to *The Seattle Times*.

> *"They're willing to do anything and everything to maintain, hold on to political power."*

If this feels the slightest bit familiar, it's because a similar situation is playing out with President Donald Trump and his impeachment trial. Shea himself has made the comparison, writing on his Facebook page in December that the investigation into his actions was "a sham," "just like with Trump." The question is, if even a left-leaning state like Washington isn't able to remove a lawmaker who has been linked to multiple white supremacist groups and was found to have committed domestic terrorism, what does that say about the situation nationally?

At the state and federal levels, there has incredible "partisan polarization," and both parties are "closing ranks," explains Christopher Parker, a political science professor at the University of Washington. "Republicans are scared, their constituents are scared, and they're willing to do anything and everything to maintain, hold on to political power." That apparently includes refusing to eject alleged criminals from office if they keep their conservative support and are never convicted in a court of law.

In December the Rampart Group, a private investigation agency, published a 108-page report that alleges Shea "planned, engaged in, and promoted a total of three armed conflicts of political violence against the United States (US) Government in three states" from 2014 to 2016.

The report emerged from a months-long investigation commissioned by the state House of Representatives, and it highlights Shea's support for the 2016 armed takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. Alongside such well-known militia members as Ammon Bundy, Shea helped with "planning and preparation" for the takeover, according to the findings.

Although investigators concluded that Shea presents no "imminent direct threat to any individual or group," they did find "considerable evidence" that since 2014, he has "presented a significant threat of political violence against employees of the Federal Government and state and local law enforcement officers, carried out through intermediaries sympathetic to the Patriot Movement."

The investigators gave Shea the opportunity to respond to the allegations made against him, but he declined to participate. Nor did he answer my requests for an interview.

Washington state House Speaker Laurie Jinkins, a Democrat, called the report "incredibly disturbing" and said that Shea should be kicked out of office. But she added that it's too soon to say whether the legislature will have any type of expulsion proceedings. "Republicans are going to have to be interested in this too, and thus far, I have not heard any interest from the minority leader nor from hardly any member of their caucus in doing this."

Jinkins said Shea can't be an effective representative now that he's not allowed in Republican caucus meetings, doesn't sit on any committees, and is restricted from using staff.

But Parker said the dangerous repercussions of Shea's remaining in office and potentially being reelected go beyond his influence in the statehouse. It "just emboldens people who are like-minded to continue to practice or display behaviors and attitudes that are consistent with his, because he's setting an example," Parker said. "People follow their leaders. People follow elites."

Since the legislative session kicked off, Shea has posted live Facebook videos defending himself against the report's findings and highlighting some of the issues he opposes: gun control, mandatory vaccinations, and abortion. The videos have received dozens of supportive comments from people in his district and elsewhere across the West.

In one clip posted at the start of the session, Shea stood in front of the Washington State Capitol with a handful of supporters behind him holding signs that read, "We stand with Matt Shea." With a microphone in his hand and a smirk on his face, he announced, "I'm still the state representative for the Fourth Legislative District in Spokane Valley, Washington, and we are keeping up the fight." He then thanked his supporters for the "thousands of messages, the thousands of e-mails and phone calls, and all the things that have been coming in." HALLIE GOLDEN

Hallie Golden is a freelance journalist based in Seattle. Her work has appeared in The New York Times, The Guardian, *and the Associated Press.*

Asking for a Friend

Liza Featherstone

A Clean Start for Retirement

Dear Liza,

My mom and her friends shared a cleaner (let's call her Maria) for about 30 years. When Maria came into their lives, she owed money to Social Security, so she asked to be paid off the books. Now she's ready to retire and has no savings, pension, or Social Security benefits. I told my mom and her friends that they should give Maria money, enough for her to contribute to the rent and bills for the apartment she shares with her daughters. They've agreed to each contribute $25 to $50 a week. I wish it were more, but all of them are widowed, in their mid-80s, and worried about money. Then a second problem arose: My mom's friends say Maria should be given the option of receiving a lump sum. I've been trying to explain that this could put Maria at risk. She could be kidnapped the next time she visits Mexico and the money extorted from her (this has recently happened to some immigrants), or her family could lean on her for money if they have an emergency or want to start a business. Far better to do a direct debit each month so she doesn't wind up completely penniless. In case they're worried about not being able to provide for her after they die, I told them another option would be to give me a lump sum, and I could do direct monthly transfers to Maria. We've been discussing this for months, and the group is being a bit slow in coming to a decision. How do we balance Maria's dignity and safety?

—Wanting to Do Right

Dear Wanting to Do Right,

First, congratulations to you, your mom, and her friends for beginning this complicated conversation, says Amy Cohen, the organizing director of Hand in Hand, a group of domestic employers pushing for better pay and working conditions for nannies, house cleaners, and home attendants. It's also terrific that your mother and her friends are pooling their resources to help Maria retire. "What's most important," Cohen stresses, "is that they do something."

Too often, well-intentioned domestic employers begin to address a problem like this and then get bogged down in details, overthinking the issues. This happens for a couple of reasons. The relationships are often close, long-term, and deeply trusting; after all, they take place in the intimate space of the home. The employers often sincerely care about the workers. And yet, Cohen points out, there is "no HR department, no structures in place" to handle any of these questions, and "domestic work has for so long been in the shadows and unregulated."

In this country, the first domestic workers were slaves and indentured servants, so the employer class became used to getting free household labor. Because of that history, domestic workers have fewer legal rights than almost any other group of workers, although they have been organizing, with some success, to change that.

Your mom and her friends may also be dragging their feet because they feel guilty that they can't contribute more money to Maria's retirement. Since there's no public social insurance program for such situations, workers like Maria end up dependent not only on the good intentions of their employers but also on what their bosses, often retirees themselves, can afford. While that's unfair to Maria, it's also not her employers' fault that they can't do more. Cohen emphasizes that it's much better that Maria get something than nothing.

Questions? Ask Liza at TheNation.com/article/asking-for-a-friend

The question of how the money should be paid to Maria—in regular installments or in a lump sum—may be simpler than it seems. Her employers should ask her which option she prefers, as she is most likely the best judge of the risks as well as the upsides of each approach. However, Cohen stresses that when her employers approach her, it's important that they emphasize that they are already planning on paying something for her retirement, so she won't feel she's expected to protest or talk them out of it. "Sometimes the employee will say, 'I can't

(continued on page 8)

ILLUSTRATION BY **JOANNA NEBORSKY**

PUBLIC HEALTH

Going Viral

A coronavirus is raging in parts of China, and the efforts to stop it from spreading globally are increasingly frenzied—cities on lockdown, public gatherings canceled, health checks at airports.

You've probably read about the outbreak. But you may not know how poorly prepared the United States is to counter a pandemic, as a result of bipartisan neglect of our public health infrastructure. In 2012 the Obama administration moved billions of dollars from the Prevention and Public Health Fund to make up for cuts to Medicare's physician payments. In 2018, Congress cut the fund by an additional $1 billion, and the Trump administration then diverted millions more from the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In response, the CDC cut its global epidemic prevention efforts by 80 percent, radically shrinking its operations in 39 of the 49 countries where it had a presence, including China and Congo, currently the epicenter of an Ebola outbreak. Last year President Trump proposed slashing the Department of Health and Human Services' budget by 12 percent and the CDC's by 10 percent.

The result of this dangerous downsizing: As the world stands on the verge of a new pandemic, the United States has 50,000 fewer local public health employees than it did in 2008. Instead of stopping an outbreak early, America is now reduced to taking the temperature of travelers at major airports.

—Sasha Abramsky

Elie Mystal

Cruel Intentions

Trump-appointed judges are bathing the courts in bigotry and pettiness.

As of this writing, Donald Trump has successfully appointed more than 180 judges to the federal bench. That's a record number, given the amount of time he has been in office. These judges will wield power for the rest of their natural lives, meaning the damage Trump does during his relatively short time bloviating from the Oval Office will achieve an air of permanence through his judges' actions over the next generation.

Most of the damage Trump judges do will be big and obvious. No serious climate change legislation will survive them; all manner of voter suppression will be allowed by them. The rights of women, members of the LGBTQ community, and other minorities will be curtailed by courts stacked with Trump's overwhelmingly white, male, Christian jurists. Unless you look, pray, and have sex exactly the way they want you to, Trump judges are going to give you a very hard time in court.

But some of the damage Trump judges do will be less visible. It will be personal, and the decisions will apply only to a relatively small number of Americans, individuals trying to live their lives with dignity. Trump judges will deny the most minor legal victories to people from underrepresented and vulnerable communities—because they can. As the headline to an influential article by *The Atlantic*'s Adam Serwer put it, "The Cruelty Is the Point."

One of those unnecessarily cruel and entirely bigoted opinions was issued by Judge Stuart Kyle Duncan last month. Before his appointment by Trump, Duncan spent several years litigating anti-LGBTQ cases as general counsel for a right-wing "Christian" group called the Becket Fund. We warned *Nation* readers about Duncan in July, when we highlighted seven of Trump's most dangerous appointments to the court. Duncan's anti-LGBTQ bias is a matter of record, yet the Senate gave him a lifetime appointment anyway.

The latest victim of that bias is Kathrine Nicole Jett, a transgender woman who is in federal prison. She asked that her name be changed in her prison records, including court documents, from her pre-transition name; she also asked that the court, in its proceedings adjudicating whether she was allowed to change her name, refer to her as "her."

Writing for a three-judge panel on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, Duncan said no. He was joined by Judge Jerry Smith, a Ronald Reagan appointee who is still alive, which should serve as a reminder of just how long these Trump judges will wield power. Judge James Dennis, a Bill Clinton appointee, dissented.

That this opinion was published at all represents a high level of judicial antipathy toward Jett and the transgender community. She is a pro se plaintiff (meaning she's not represented by a lawyer) filing from prison. Her case raises no grave constitutional concerns or questions of precedent. In fact, there isn't a lot of disagreement on the law here: All three judges agreed that, as a general principle, judges can call people whatever they want. Even if the panel disagreed with Jett, it could have simply dismissed the case without an opinion or issued an unpublished ruling. There was no reason to haul this case out in the open and insult not just Jett but the entire transgender community with this opinion.

That is, unless insulting the transgender community was Duncan's goal from the beginning. After all, this is the lawyer who served as lead counsel in the case opposing Gavin Grimm, a transgender teen who sued a school board in Virginia to use the bathroom of his choice. Duncan's 10-page opinion in the Jett case is a disgusting highlight reel of anti-trans bigotry and pettiness.

Judge Stuart Kyle Duncan's anti-LGBTQ bias is a matter of record, yet the Senate gave him a lifetime appointment.

Here's how he opens his argument denying Jett's motion: "No authority supports the proposition that we may require litigants, judges, court personnel, or anyone else to refer to gender-dysphoric litigants with pronouns matching their subjective gender identity." Using "gender-dysphoric" is, to many minds, a low-key slur. It suggests transgender people suffer from a psychological disorder. It's exactly the same kind of psycho-bigotry that people once used to dismiss gays and lesbians as mentally deranged.

Duncan goes on to point out that many courts

TOP: ANDY FRIEDMAN; BOTTOM: MARK RALSTON / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

US CIVIL RIGHTS: ON THE ROAD TO FREEDOM

Jackson, Little Rock, Memphis, Selma, Birmingham, and Montgomery

OCTOBER 18–25, 2020

The civil rights movement is one of the most significant chapters in our country's history. Over a half-century after the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., it is time for our nation to reflect on how far we've come and how much remains to be accomplished. While we confront increasingly racialized violence, emboldened white nationalists, and a morally bankrupt president, we can look back to the victories of the past and to the hundreds of thousands of brave Americans who fueled this history-altering movement, fighting—and too often dying—for the cause of equality.

For those working toward social justice today, there are great lessons to be learned from the civil rights movement, in which a profound demonstration of commitment and courage succeeded against all odds. In the words of Dr. King, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

Join host **André Robert Lee**, acclaimed filmmaker and educator, and travel in the company of like-minded progressives on this journey to **Jackson, Little Rock, Memphis, Selma, Birmingham,** and **Montgomery**. Along the way we will visit iconic sites and meet people who were directly involved in the historic civil rights movement.

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THE Nation. TRAVELS

"Objection!" is a new monthly column focusing on the law, the courts, and the way most people experience justice in this country.

do use the appropriate pronouns, as a courtesy. He gives no explanation why such courtesy is too high a bar for him here but instead weakly offers that referring to litigants by their preferred pronouns would be an indication of bias toward the litigants' point of view.

Of course, the opposite is true: It's the refusal to extend the slightest courtesy to people that illustrates a judge's true bigotry against their cause. If you can't even call a transgender woman "she" when she asks you to, how can you possibly be impartial when she asks you to affirm her rights? Duncan's refusal to write "she" instead of "he" in an opinion tells you all you need to know about his hostility toward transgender rights.

At the end of the opinion, Duncan does what is always the last howl of those with the intellectually weaker argument: He invokes the slippery slope and argues that if we call this one woman a woman, then soon our entire language will be overrun by strange new pronouns. "If a court orders one litigant referred to as 'her' (instead of 'him')," he writes, "then the court can hardly refuse when the next litigant moves to be referred to as 'xemself' (instead of 'himself')." The horror!

The correct legal counterargument to this slippery slope of trash is to remind Duncan that the actual case and controversy is over calling a woman "she." And the correct moral response is: So what? So what if future litigants would like different pronouns? So what if they request forms of linguistic respect not yet invented? What is it about judges like Duncan that they act as if common courtesy amounts to the destruction of their most sacred traditions?

Trump has signed the country up for a generation of this kind of cruelty and pettiness. Duncan is 48 and has been on the bench less than two years. It's frightening to think what he will do in the next 20. Be kind to one another, because Trump judges will never be kind to you. ■

(continued from page 5)

possibly accept that,' when she means, 'How generous of you!' How they present it matters," Cohen says. "They are in a position of power."

If readers want help with similar questions, check out some of Hand in Hand's online resources at domesticemployers.org and consider downloading Alia, an app developed by the National Domestic Workers Alliance to make it easier to provide house cleaners benefits.

Dear Liza,

I'm bothered by the fact that in my social circle (mostly white, liberal professionals), moms get together with other moms but never the dads—a pattern I have contributed to. This has meant not only a restricted community of people I have had access to socially but also that there have been fewer people in this social circle who can help me out. When I do hear of dads arranging weekend outings (including father-daughter hikes and such), I think how much my son and I would love to be a part of those. Why haven't we gotten past restrictive gender roles around child care and socializing? Is it just my social circle, or is this a wider phenomenon?

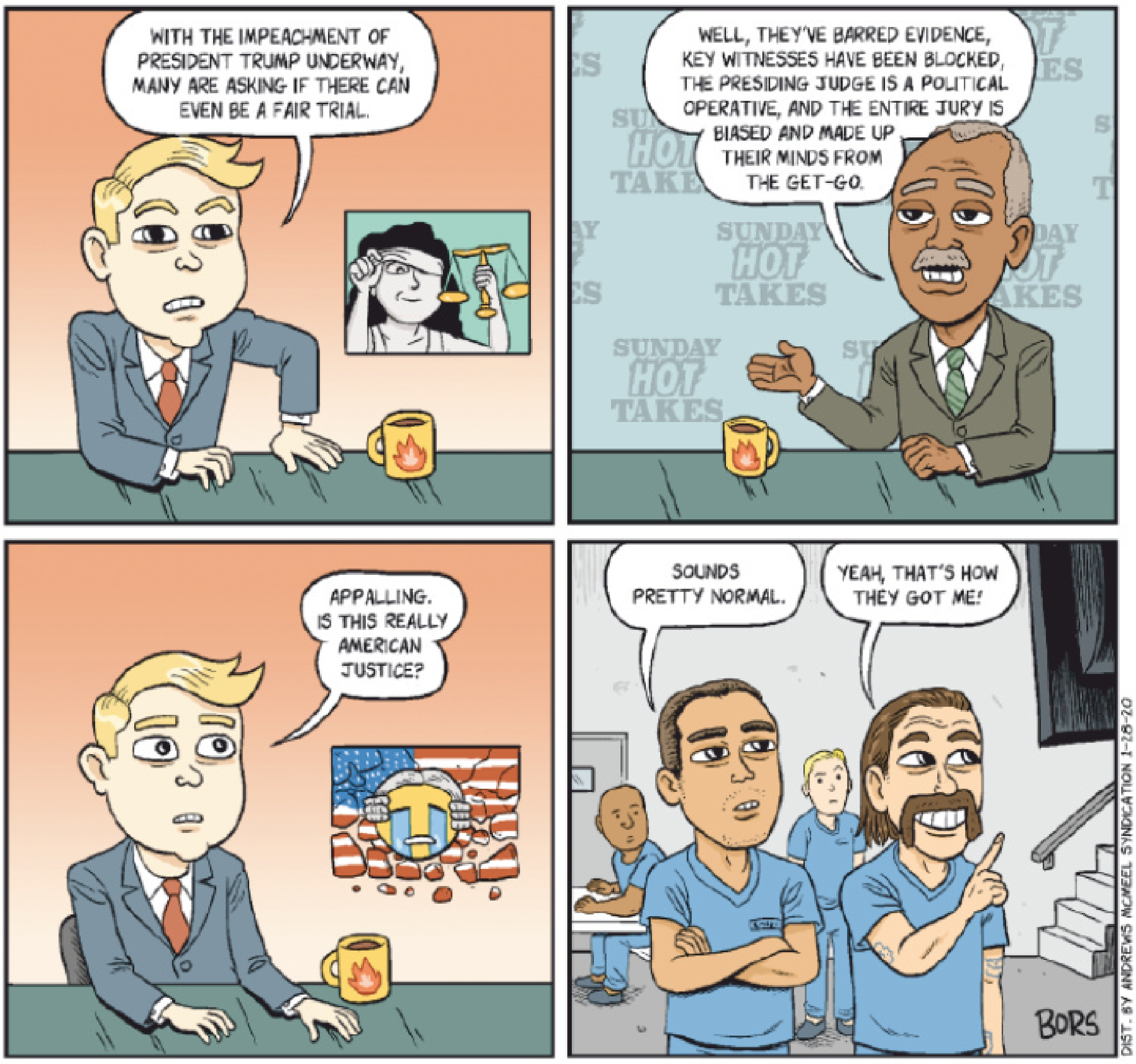
—Bewildered Mom

Dear Bewildered Mom,

I've noticed this, too. One problem is persistent stereotypes about what humans enjoy—that only men want to hike or watch their kids play sports (while women, I suppose, "prefer" to clean the bathroom). Heterosexuality is also still shrouded in paranoia: Dads might fear that if they go out of their way to befriend moms, they'll be seen as creepy, and moms may worry that they'll be viewed as sluts or husband stealers if they try to hang out with the dads. In my experience, one can accomplish a lot by pretending such concerns don't exist. Ask the dads if they'd like to get together and take the kids out for mini-golf, hikes, or whatever they and their kids might enjoy. This won't work, of course, if the dads in your circle are regressive clods who don't want to hike with women or can't see you as anything other than a sex object, but in that case, you wouldn't want to hang out with them anyway. ■

COMIX NATION

MATT BORS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BASIC INCOME

Fostering a Future

Santa Clara County in California may become the first place in the United States to approve a guaranteed basic income for young adults transitioning out of foster care. The proposed program would give $1,000 per month for up to two years to adults ages 18 to 21 who are in extended foster care and those 21 to 24 who age out of the foster care system. Every year, approximately 150 people emancipate out of foster care in the county, according to its social services agency.

Young adults who leave the foster care system are at higher risk of homelessness and job insecurity. Nationally, fewer than 50 percent of 23- and 24-year-olds who recently left foster care are employed, and roughly 30 percent have experienced homelessness, according to a University of Chicago study. As Dontae Lartigue told San Jose's *Mercury News*, "Right now when a foster youth like me emancipates, I don't have credit, I don't have enough income, and I don't have rental history. So most of the time I've already got my back against the wall."

Santa Clara wouldn't be the only place to experiment with a basic income. In Stockton, California, 125 people at or below the median income level are receiving $500 per month in an 18-month experiment. And in Jackson, Mississippi, 15 low-income African American mothers received $1,000 per month for a year. —Jessica Suriano

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Atossa Araxia Abrahamian

Warming to Climate Refugees?

A recent ruling opens the door to new types of protected status.

Climate change is already forcing people to flee their communities. Some relocate within their countries, becoming displaced as they seek drier, higher, cooler, safer ground. The unluckiest climate migrants have no choice but to go abroad, and the worst-off among them have no job or relatives to help them do so legally.

That was the predicament Ioane Teitiota faced when the rising Pacific Ocean began to subsume his home on the island nation of Kiribati. So in 2007 he moved to New Zealand with his wife, where they stayed for five years without a visa and had three children, who are not eligible for Kiwi citizenship.

You could call what the couple did breaking the law—but with storm surges demolishing housing and ruining crops in Kiribati, you could also call it staying alive. "I'm the same as people who are fleeing war. Those who are afraid of dying, it's the same as me," Teitiota told the BBC.

In 2012, Teitiota's visa expired. That's when he began his journey to become the world's first formally recognized climate refugee. He applied for refugee status in New Zealand and argued that he would face enormous hardship and imminent death, not unlike a persecuted minority, should he be sent home. His bid was rejected by several New Zealand courts, so he appealed his case until it reached the United Nations Human Rights Committee, which decides whether countries have violated international humanitarian law.

In early January the committee ruled against his appeal—with some important caveats. Teitiota, the committee decided, did not face unique and imminent danger by returning home. While its decision acknowledged the ghastly living conditions he described—water shortages, crop failures, and a systemic breakdown of island infrastructure, it noted that he would not starve, drown, or face extraordinary hardship. His claim for protected status under the established covenant would not stand.

But the judges didn't rule out a scenario in which deteriorating environmental conditions could make someone eligible for protected status under the Refugee Convention. In such a situation, should an applicant's case be found legitimate, they would deem it against international law to send the person back to his or her home country.

This is a frustrating response for all the questions it *doesn't* answer. What exactly does it mean to be a climate refugee or, indeed, any kind of refugee when so many push factors in migration—from low wages to inadequate housing and health care—are intertwined and interdependent with the state of the natural world? Where do you draw the line?

However, the UN judgment acknowledges that climate refugees are a real thing and that even if Teitiota didn't fit the exact criteria, there are likely many who could—or soon will.

It also raises another, more difficult question: Who cares what the United Nations thinks? The world's most powerful countries, including the US, have flouted established norms, treaties, and conventions in favor of their own version of what's right—America first, China first, India first, Brazil first, and so on.

Another case, one concerning the stateless Rohingya, illustrates how well intentioned and agonizingly toothless an international tribunal can be. In a case filed with the International Court of Justice last year, the Republic of the Gambia, a majority-Muslim African nation, accused the Southeast Asian state of Myanmar of inadequately protecting its Rohingya Muslim minority. Observers hailed the filing as an act of Global South solidarity, and in January the court ordered Myanmar to take legal measures to ensure the Rohingya's safety. (This all took place after the military killed, injured, and drove out hundreds of thousands of them.)

> *A UN judgment on a climate refugee claim raises a more difficult question: Who cares what the United Nations thinks?*

What the court did not do was compel Myanmar to cooperate with a full investigation; nor did it rule on whether the army committed genocide. It simply asked Myanmar—which has demonstrated no goodwill in this area—to play nice. Gambia is not going to invade (liberate?) Myanmar. And who's going to back up Gambia on the diplomatic stage?

In theory, other UN bodies like the Security Council could impose sanctions. But diplomatically, that often winds up being a nonstarter: What government wants to give another country a hard time about things that happen inside its borders? If Myanmar complies, it is because it has been pressured into doing so by its allies. But shame—particularly among world powers—is losing its coercive force. It's tempting to bemoan the deterioration of the so-called liberal world order. For a time, many nations felt more pressure to adhere to certain norms for fear of being marginalized or seen as rogues. Those days are over. But that's not an argument for going back to the days of Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, who, for all their lip service to human rights and international cooperation, believed the best way forward was through neoimperialist policies and corporate social responsibility.

Instead of succumbing to nostalgia, we should vote nationalists out of office and back political candidates who pledge to take international commitments seriously. That means creating consequences—electoral, personal, reputational—for those who renege on their promises to humans and the climate. And it means dreaming of new ways to ensure that ordinary people and their environment enjoy basic protections, for example by issuing special visas for people from flooding countries and installing (supranationally or country by country) an automatic seizure of the assets of carbon emitters.

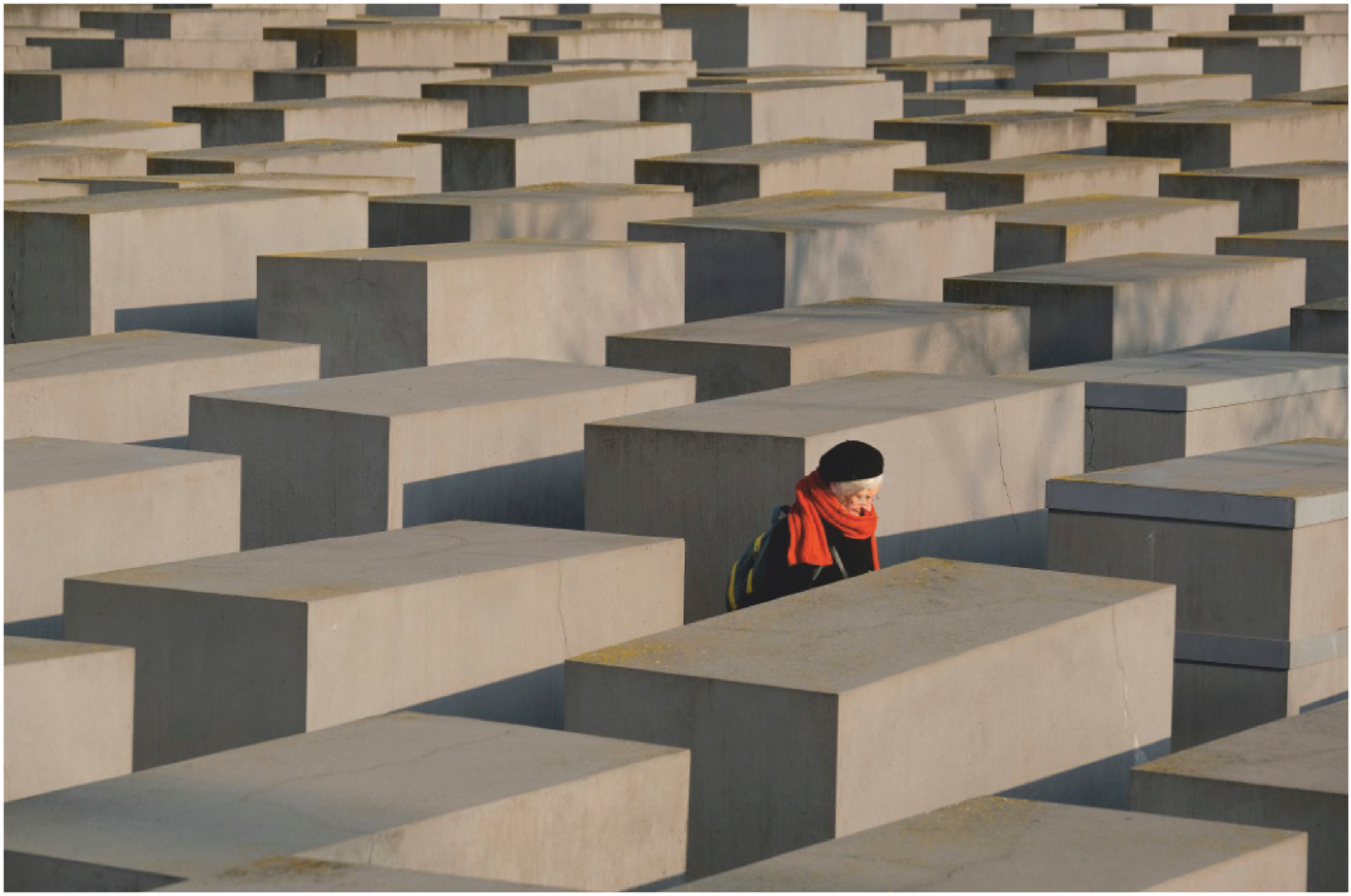
At the precise moment we desperately need binding rules on carbon emissions, human rights abuses, and labor standards, we're confronted with intransigent nationalists who care more about sovereignty than planetary doom. Saying no to nationalism and bordered, cloistered thinking has never been more important. ■

> *We should vote nationalists out of office and back political candidates who pledge to take their international commitments seriously.*

SNAPSHOT / SEAN GALLUP

Never Again

A visitor in Berlin walks among stelae at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, which commemorates Jews killed by the Nazis during the Holocaust. January 27 was the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp, the most notorious of the many Nazi concentration camps.



GETTY IMAGES

Calvin Trillin
Deadline Poet

Mike Pompeo Implies That a Reporter Who Pressed Him Can't Locate Ukraine on the Map

Mike's insulting, of course, and quite childish at that.
But this might not be labeled a loss
If you think of the blunders abroad we'd avoid
By imposing such tests on his boss.

The Nation.

The TRUMP Voter Conundrum

Can Democrats chip away the president's supporters without compromising their own values?

By
Tana Ganeva

Jason Rochester met Cecilia Gonzalez in 2004, on her first day of work at a UPS depot in the Atlanta suburb of Roswell. He fell for her right away. “I liked her from Day 1—I thought she was beautiful,” he recalls. He wanted to date, but she wanted to remain friends. Part of the reason was that she had a secret: She was undocumented. She crossed the border from her native Mexico when she was 19 and had lived in the half-shadows for almost a decade. When a friend shared her secret with Rochester, he decided he liked her so much, it didn’t matter. They got married in 2007. Six years later, in 2013, they had a son named Ashton.

When Donald Trump railed against immigrant rapists, murderers, and gang members during the 2016 campaign, Rochester thought he was right. After all, who wants violent criminals of any origin in the country? Gonzalez wasn’t so sure. She worried about Trump. But her husband assured her that Trump wasn’t talking about people like her. She had never even gotten a traffic ticket.

A devout Christian, Rochester didn’t love Trump, with his countless infidelities and penchant for nasty insults. But he couldn’t bring himself to vote for Hillary Clinton; her stance on abortion was his bright red line. So in November 2016, he cast his vote for the man in the MAGA hat. “I had to go with the fact that my wife would be fine because she was not a bad person,” he says. “I was wrong.”

On January 9, 2018, Gonzalez found herself back in Juanacatlán, the village in central Mexico she had escaped years earlier. She wound up there after a check-in with Immigration and Customs Enforcement went horribly awry; in anticipation that the agency might move to deport her under the Trump administration’s increasingly anti-immigrant policies, her lawyer volunteered that she would deport herself. She will be unable to apply for reentry to the United States for a decade, at which point she may still be denied.

Rochester was shocked by what he saw in Juanacatlán when he visited his wife. “Dirt roads, no gas stations, no industry, hardly at all. No buses, no jobs,” he says. “Plus it was dangerous. People were being killed and disappearing. Family members coming up missing, neighbors getting shot.” While Gonzalez was stuck in Mexico, they learned that their son, now 6, had Wilms tumor, a rare form of kidney cancer.

“I would like a meeting with Trump,” Rochester says. “I want him to explain to my son why his mommy can’t ever come home.”

Can the Democrats win over these swing voters—people like Rochester who voted for Trump in 2016 but have since been turned off by his behavior?

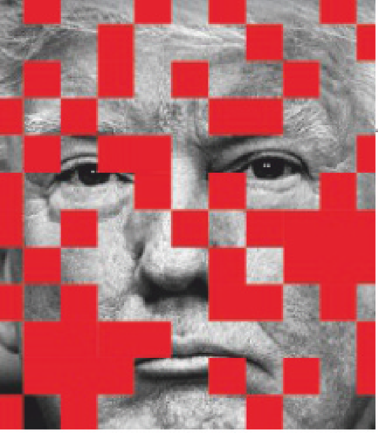
Three years after casting what he considered a “lesser of two evils” vote for Trump, Rochester says he would not vote for the president again. He’s disgusted by the detention camps at the southwestern border. “They’re children. It’s sickening that our country has stooped to this level,” he says. But he’s not electrified by the Democrats, either. “I would definitely not be opposed to voting for a Democrat, but as of now, the choices are not looking good,” he says. Rochester voted for Barack Obama in 2008 because he believed Obama would pass immigration reforms that would help people like his wife, but he opted not to vote for Obama again in 2012—he says he can’t remember whether he voted for Mitt Romney or sat out the election—because he thought Obama hadn’t delivered.

As a man who voted for the nation’s first black president and then, eight years later, pulled the lever for an anti-immigrant white supremacist—only to see his life upended by that very man—Rochester is an extreme example but not an altogether unusual one. Between 5 and 15 percent of the voting electorate, or as many as 9.2 million people (the estimates depend on the data sources, of which there are many), took a similarly puzzling path, voting for Obama in 2012, only to opt for Trump in 2016. Now, as the country hurtles toward the 2020 election, these voters have become both a news media fetish, endlessly interrogated about their electoral intentions, and a question mark at the center of the Democratic Party’s strategy: Can the Democrats win over these swing voters—people like Rochester who voted for Trump in 2016 but have become turned off by his behavior? Or is the Democrats’ best hope that these voters will simply sit out the election? Should the party play for their support, or is it better off focusing its energies elsewhere?

It’s a controversial question, one that touches not only on the Democrats’ 2020 electoral strategy but also, many argue, on the soul of the Democratic Party itself. To critics, the idea of spending precious electoral resources courting former Trump supporters is as flawed as it is absurd, a fundamentally backward-looking strategy that would require the party to cater to a constituency that is out of sync with core Democratic values. These voters, critics charge, are a lot like the Reagan Democrats of old—white men and women, often from the Rust Belt, who began defecting from the party in 1980—and while they may have legitimate grievances, they voted for a racist who was credibly accused of sexual assault. To spend time and capital courting them seems tantamount to flinging dirt in the face of the party’s base (most notably, people of color,

Far from home: Jason Rochester, Cecilia Gonzalez, and their son, Ashton, in Mexico in November 2019, during their most recent visit with one another.

Tana Ganeva is a reporter covering criminal justice, drugs, immigration, guns, and politics.



progressives, and women) who are both loyal and, to judge by the results of the 2018 and '19 elections, fired up.

It's also a cop-out, the same critics charge: In a country where nearly half of the electorate remains untapped and unengaged, why scrape and scramble for a few million fickle votes? And why scramble when the effort may well end in defeat? Rochester's dad, who lost his daughter-in-law to Trump's hard-line immigration policies, still plans to vote for the president on the basis of the economy. And polling suggests that that favorable view is not an outlier. Among Republicans, his approval ratings have hovered close to 90 percent for much of the past year, and it has never dipped below 77 percent since he took office. According to one analysis of Obama-Trump voters who voted in the 2018 election, three-quarters opted for the Republicans.

Despite all this, a dedicated flank of the Democratic Party continues to insist that there might be a way to bring Trump defectors back—and that it's not only sensible but also essential to try. Many of those making the argument come from the party's cautious center, and for them, the argument is as ideological as it is practical. These are the Joe Biden and Pete Buttigieg advocates, the Mike Bloomberg boosters, and the Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders skeptics, who fear that the party's shift to the left will be its political as well as its electoral demise. But there's also a cadre of wonks and number crunchers who argue that Democrats would be foolish not to make a play for swing voters and, just as crucial, that the party doesn't need to tack to the center to do so.

"It may very well be that winning back some of the Obama-Trump voters is likely to pay particularly big dividends in the blue wall states."

—Brian F. Schaffner, political scientist

Swing voters, this group argues, are more diverse than the stereotypes would indicate; their backgrounds are varied, their politics idiosyncratic. And while a number of recent studies suggest that many of them lean Republican, they also reveal that a respectable portion hold views consistent with the most loyal Democrats'. As Sean McElwee, a cofounder of Data for Progress, and political scientist Brian F. Schaffner wrote in a recent *New York Times* op-ed, "On issues like gun control, health care and the environment, these voters look remarkably like the Democratic Party's base." They concluded, "These patterns show that Democrats can win back Obama-Trump voters by focusing on issues that also appeal to their base."

More important, Schaffner told *The Nation*, Democrats have to try to win these voters back, and they have to do so for the same stubborn reason the two parties have long vied for this demographic: The country's tangled electoral system makes it hard to win without them. It's a lesson that Clinton learned the devastating way in 2016, when she won the popular vote but lost the Electoral College, and one that this year's Democratic nominee would be foolish to ignore. "The Electoral College map is such that it seems like Democrats still probably need to win Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin," Schaffner wrote in an e-mail to *The Nation*. "And in those states, it is less clear that mobilizing lower turnout groups is going to be sufficient. Thus, it may very well be that winning back some of those Obama-Trump voters is likely to pay particularly big dividends in the blue wall states."

Trump no more? Brooke Johnson Stanley, a disgruntled former Trump supporter, has yet to decide who will get her vote in 2020.

The Trump team knows this—just as they knew it in 2016, when the campaign harnessed the combined power of Big Data and social media to microtarget swing voters in critical states. Now the campaign is at it again, dumping millions of dollars into an aggressive online strategy, putting these voters into play whether Democrats like it or not.

All of which raises the same set of questions posed by Rochester's tale of Trump support gone sour: Can the Democrats lure back enough voters like him to tip the Electoral College in their favor? And just as important, can they do this without compromising the party's rising spirit of multiracial progressivism?

POLITICAL STRATEGIST AND VETERAN DEMOCRATIC pollster Stanley Greenberg has been studying swing voters for decades. In 1985 he traveled to Macomb County, Michigan, to study a group of people that he would famously dub "Reagan Democrats," and he has returned to the county periodically in the many years since. Last year, he turned his focus on the changing Democratic base and published a book, *RIP GOP*, arguing that demographic changes—the progressivism of young people and people of color—favor Democrats and doom Republicans in the long term. In the short term, he says, Democrats in 2020 can still reach voters who cast a ballot for Trump in 2016. "Democrats with a more progressive economic policy could reach some of these voters," he tells *The Nation*.

Over the summer, Greenberg and his team ran a series of focus groups in rural parts of the country. They went to Bangor, Maine; Oak Creek, Wisconsin; and a rural area outside Las Vegas. Two-thirds of the participants voted for Trump in 2016, and all identified as independents or Republicans.

The Second Congressional District in Maine flipped from Obama to Trump in 2016. When Greenberg asked the Maine women how they felt about the state of the country, they were not optimistic. "Scared. Concerned. Hopeless," they said. They have no plans, let alone hopes, for retirement. "Never," said one woman. "It will never happen," another concurred.

"Issues that matter to them: health care, prescription drug prices—these people are on the edge," Greenberg says. "The income gains aren't happening in their communities, so it's alienating for all of them when Trump is talking about the great economy. Above all, they're getting killed by drug prices, the pharmaceutical industry, the opioid crisis they see in their community." They think corporations and the 1 percent are only concerned about profit, he adds. One woman described the pharmaceutical industry as "dead evil, evil." Another called student loan debt "insane" and a "racket."

"He's part of the 1 percent—that concerns me," one Maine woman said, referring to Trump. "Even though he gives his paycheck back to the US, he's still part of the 1 percent." Another woman chimed in, "He forgot about the forgotten Americans. Because if he was a voice, he'd be doing something about the drug epidemic. He'd be doing something about health care."

Asked about the state of the country, women in Wisconsin echoed their counterparts in Maine. "Sad. Worried. Irritated. Disappointed,"

18+

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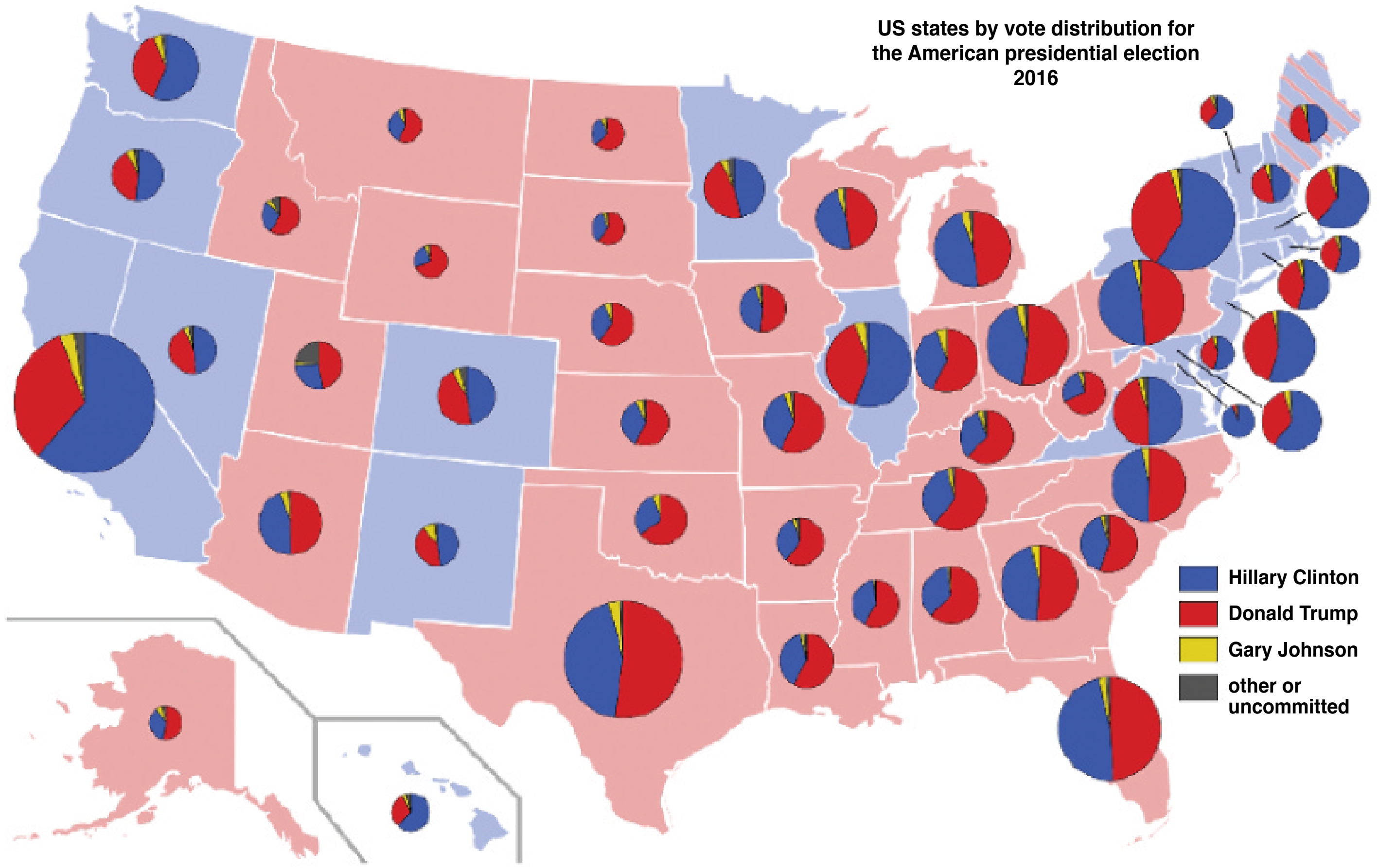
were among their responses.

Greenberg was curious about how Trump's attacks on "the Squad"—Democratic Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, and Ayanna Pressley—was viewed by the focus groups. His team found that white rural male voters didn't really care about Trump's attacks on the Squad. But they were a major turn-off for rural blue-collar white women, and that's an important group of voters. In 2016, Trump expanded the GOP's margins with them by 21 points.

Greenberg found that rural women didn't approve of Trump's personal style. "Since the election, everything Trump is doing is producing a counter-reaction," he says. One-third of the white working-class women interviewed by his team who voted for Trump said they'd consider voting for someone else this year. They thought Trump was impulsive and mean. A bully.

The View From 2016


US states by vote distribution for the American presidential election 2016
Hillary Clinton
Donald Trump
Gary Johnson
other or uncommitted

ALI ZIFAN CC BY-SA

"What we found was, they shook their heads when they watched him on TV or in response to his tweets. He was actually driving them away. The biggest piece of it was, they found him divisive," Greenberg says.

The president's nasty tweets alarmed them. "I think from now on, maybe presidents shouldn't be allowed on Twitter," a woman in Bangor told Greenberg. Another woman fretted about Trump's "mental status.... His tweets are the reason I just have no confidence in him," she added. "I mean, he says one thing one day, he says something else the next. He contradicts himself. Doesn't seem like he has a lot of common sense sometimes."

BROOKE JOHNSON STANLEY LIVES IN RURAL Wilkes County, North Carolina. She's a young mother who is active in her local Baptist church. She works with Project Lazarus, a group that helps people in the community who are addicted to opioids, as she was once herself. A lifelong conservative, she voted for Trump in 2016 because she says it's her civic duty to vote in every election and she couldn't bring herself to vote for Clinton. Johnson Stanley was turned off by what she perceived to be Clinton's dishonesty. Johnson Stanley says Clinton flip-flopped too much, depending on her audience. She just didn't like her. "At the risk of sounding foolish, there is just something about her manner, her voice, her attitude, and that smirk of hers that just drove me nuts," Johnson Stanley tells *The Nation*. "He was the lesser of two evils. I disliked him greatly too, but I disliked her more."

> **"His tweets are the reason I just have no confidence in him. I mean, he says one thing one day, he says something else the next."**
>
> —a focus group participant in Bangor, Maine

An Obama fan and voter, Johnson Stanley says she wants the country to succeed. After three years of Trump's antics, she says she is considering not voting for him again. "Trump has this lack of moral compass. It almost overshadows even some of the politics I agree with him on," she says. "There's such a division. He just fans the flames. I can't understand why somebody can't take his Twitter away. It embarrasses me."

The challenge for Johnson Stanley and the Democrats who might want to woo her is that she is generally unenthusiastic about the Democratic field of candidates and is turned off by the party's push for impeachment. Her favorite 2020 contender is Andrew Yang, who she says is "authentic, likable, just genuine." She also likes Buttigieg, although she's "not sure he's ready." But she is not a fan of the Democratic front-runners. Warren and Sanders are "too liberal," while Biden is "a stereotypical politician."

Still, she acknowledges, he's "better as a person than Trump."

That tiny affirmation may not count as a ringing endorsement, but it could presage a larger shift among voters like her. Joe Ferullo, who worked as a CBS programming executive from 2006 to 2019 and now writes a politics column for *The Hill*, believes enough women share Johnson Stanley's desire for a return to normality that it could be an advantage for the Democrats this year. He was at CBS in 2017 when the network commissioned a study of 3,000 women ages 25 to 54. It wasn't a political poll; instead, the survey asked how they felt about their lives. The most common sentiment, Ferullo says, was "I need a sanity break—life feels out of control."

The current political scene hardly inspires confidence or a sense of stability, exacerbating the stress of financial insecurity. "The last 10 years have been tough, ever since the Great Recession," Ferullo continues. "The economy is changing under their feet—especially working-class women. Maybe 10 years ago, they or their husbands lost a job. Now a lot of them are involved in the gig economy. Then you throw a few years of Trump on top of that? Life just seemed a little crazy to them."

Behind the blue wall: Voters line up to cast their ballots in Michigan in 2016, the first time since 1988 that the state went for a Republican presidential candidate.

JEFF KOWALSKY / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

In 2016 voters wanted dramatic change—to blow things up, Ferullo says. But now they might be ready for things to go back to normal.

IF GREENBERG’S AND FERULLO’S FINDINGS hold true, the dual stressors of economic fear and political chaos might steer some swing voters away from Trump in 2020. But there’s a serious snag. Some of his most atrocious policies—like his war on immigrants—have broad support among the people who helped sweep him into office, even if they don’t love his Twitter feed.

From March to October of last year, the Swing Voter Project led a series of focus groups composed of so-called persuadable voters, who voted for one major party’s candidate in 2012, then for the other party’s nominee in 2016. In other words, from Romney to Clinton or Obama to Trump.

Rich Thau, the president and a cofounder of Engagious, which spearheads the Swing Voter Project, tells *The Nation* that there are different types of persuadable voters. “One is change voters—they like to change things up. Maybe they voted for [George W.] Bush, got sick of him…. Obama promised change, so they voted Obama, but then soured on him. Then they’ll say something like ‘Hillary Clinton was more of the same, so we voted Trump.’ They don’t necessarily have ideological consistency. They fall in love, fall out of love.”

> **“The economy matters. In Bowling Green, Ohio—it’s not a booming place—you had the greatest dissatisfaction with the economy and with Trump.”**
>
> —Rich Thau, cofounder, Engagious

Another category consists of people who are open to Democrats but didn’t like Clinton. “That’s where you see an Obama vote and then an anti-Hillary vote,” Thau says. Their thoughts on Clinton reveal why she was so vulnerable to a challenge from a crude TV personality. One man who participated in a focus group in Appleton, Wisconsin, and who previously voted for Democrats because labor issues are important to him, said he had doubts about whether “she could be trusted or not.” Another man, who also had doubts about Clinton’s trustworthiness, said, “She’s just a not good person. That’s my opinion.” (While they didn’t explicitly refer to Clinton’s gender, the idea that Clinton’s “badness” made them vote for Trump suggests a far different standard of behavior for the female candidate.)

Most participants are not news junkies or even regular Fox News watchers. They tend not to follow politics closely and get most of their information from Facebook, friends, coworkers, family members, or their local news outlets. Thau asks me if I follow hockey, and when I say no, he points out that my limited knowledge of the sport (“There’s a Stanley Cup?”) is more or less the level of information his focus groups have about politics.

Asked what state Biden is from, one group sat in awkward silence until an older white woman tentatively answered, “Minnesota, maybe?” They don’t read *The New York Times*—which has published a series of stories about Trump’s financial disasters through the years—so many buy into his narrative that he’s a successful businessman and therefore a good steward of the economy.

Still, Thau’s findings align with Greenberg’s conclusion that a Democrat could reach people who are struggling. Enthusiasm for Trump has lagged in areas suffering from economic instability. “The state of the economy where we did focus groups, it matters. In Bowling Green, Ohio—it’s not a booming place—you had the greatest dissatisfaction with the economy and with Trump,” Thau says.

But he warns that a majority of persuadable voters want to give Trump a second term. A Democrat must be able to tie pocketbook worries to Trump’s policies while rebutting his inevitable fusillade of attacks, such as the idea in 2016 that “Crooked Hillary” was not to be trusted.

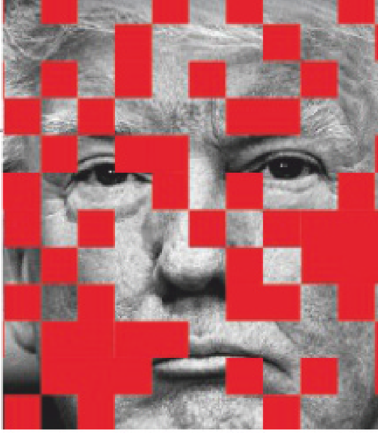
Like Greenberg, Thau found that Trump’s conduct was a turnoff. Voters in a focus group in Ohio were nostalgic for Obama because of his comportment. Several cast their vote hoping that Trump would change once he got into office. At a July 8 focus group in Macomb County—home of Greenberg’s original Reagan Democrats—four out of 12 focus group participants said they’d vote for Obama over Trump. Another woman in the focus group said she missed Obama because he created a sense of the “normal.” But she added that she’d probably vote for Trump again, since the current crop of Democratic candidates wasn’t doing anything for her.

“There’s no silver bullet to pull people away from Trump,” Thau points out. On the issue of immigration—where progressives have found Trump the most inhumane—people who voted for him in 2016 mostly seem to love him for this hard-line policy. “They think it’s the greatest thing ever,” Thau says. “For them, what the president’s doing is exactly why they voted for him. They want the wall built. They want the foreigners kept out.”

When Thau asked the focus group what should be done about “all those people coming to the border,” their response was clear. “Send them home,” they said.

FORTY-YEAR-OLD ALEJANDRA JUAREZ WAS deported from her home in Florida to Mexico in 2018, thanks to Trump’s increasingly fierce anti-immigrant policies. Like Cecilia Gonzalez’s husband, Juarez’s husband voted for Trump in 2016.

“In two days, it’ll be a year since I got here,” Juarez



tells *The Nation*, speaking by phone from her new home in the Yucatán Peninsula. "When the new president took over and he came up with his new law, zero tolerance… that's how people like myself became a priority where we weren't before," she says. "Still hurts like yesterday."

Juarez fled her home in Mexico when she was 18, making her way to Florida, where she eventually met her husband, Cuauhtemoc "Temo" Juarez. He was a Marine. He was deployed three times, including a 13-month stint in Iraq. He became a US citizen only days before he served in the Iraq War. Almost two decades later, when they learned that she was going to be deported, they were shocked. Trump promised to go after criminals, not the spouses of US military vets. "Oh, my gosh, I wish he'd have said, 'I'm going to deport anyone,'" Alejandra Juarez says. "Then we would have saw it coming…. My husband would not have voted for him. He said he'd deport criminals. And no one wants rapists in the country. But… I feel like [Trump] lied. He brainwashed people."

I ask her husband if he regrets voting for Trump. "Regret" isn't quite the right word, Temo Juarez replies, but then he can't land on a different word. Right now, he considers himself undecided in 2020. As a lifelong Republican, he says he doesn't know if he can vote for any of the Democrats who are running. "I may just hold my vote," he says. He and his wife try not to discuss politics.

If Donald Trump had your wife deported but you can't stomach voting for one of the many Democrats vying to oust him, it seems there's little hope for the Democrats to make headway with 2016 Trump voters. Perhaps the best progressives can hope for is that these disenchanted Trump voters stay home in 2020, as Juarez suggests he might.

And yet that may be too pessimistic a read of the situation. (It's also an unconscionably cynical approach for a party that claims to be on the side of inclusion and enfranchisement.) While the Juarezes' case demonstrates the hurdles Democrats face persuading some swing voters to come back into the fold, it also hints at Trump's weakness going into this election year—namely the gulf between what he promised as a candidate and what he has delivered as president.

Both Jason Rochester and Temo Juarez say they thought that, if elected, Trump would deport only violent criminals. Instead he deported their perfectly nice wives. Their cases are extreme, but a similar dynamic plays out across a range of issues. Candidate Trump blew up the uninspiring Republican establishment in the primaries. President Trump seems to come close to blowing up the world several times a day. As a candidate, Trump made a somewhat compelling case about the negative impact of trade policies, leaving Clinton in the unenviable position of being linked to NAFTA. As president, Trump has not done much to preserve working-class jobs. Nor has he crafted a reasonable alternative to the Affordable Care Act. What will his strategy be if, say, Sanders—who arguably has a legitimate claim to authentic economic populism—asks Trump what happened to his promise of health "insurance for everybody"?

This vulnerability appears particularly pronounced with female swing voters and tracks closely with what we saw in the 2018 and 2019 elections. Tired of the drama and feeling economically pinched, women showed up to vote for Democratic candidates with overwhelming determination. And they may well do so again.

What this suggests is that there could be an opening for the right candidate delivering the right kind of message. The Democratic establishment seems frightened that nominating a progressive candidate will turn off swing voters, prompting the late entries of Bloomberg and Deval Patrick into the race. But focus groups suggest that one of Trump's biggest weaknesses going into 2020 is his failure to deliver on a truly populist policy. A Democrat should be able to make the case that a true progressive platform would benefit many voters, from blue-collar workers to rural white women to young people of color. And it doesn't require choosing a centrist candidate like Biden. Democrats could tap into Trump fatigue while broadcasting the message that he has failed to deliver on health care, well-paid jobs, or the opioid epidemic. They can expose the faux populism that propelled his campaign as a sham and offer a progressive alternative.

While the Juarezes' case demonstrates the hurdles Democrats face persuading swing voters, it also hints at Trump's weakness going into the 2020 election.

There's no surefire way to know what these voters will do on November 3. Electoral experts who project the outcome with confidence are likely to repeat the mistakes of 2016. And given how uncertain swing voters are, ramping up the base, reenfranchising purged voters, and engaging those who have long been tuned out is essential.

The primary field will start to thin, especially after the Iowa caucuses. At that point, any candidate who comports himself or herself with more dignity than Trump (which shouldn't be that hard) and offers a vision that addresses bread-and-butter issues will likely have the best shot at reaching swing voters without betraying the progressive trends that doom the Republican Party in the long term.

"There's a possibility that we might see in this campaign, depending on who the Democrat is, a left-focused populism against a more Trumpian right-focused populism," Thau says. "It could be a duel between which flavor of populism people like better." ■

Fiesta
E THERE IS NO
Mañana

In good times and in bad: Temo and Alejandra Juarez, whose lives were upended by Trump's immigration policies, in Mexico, where she has lived since being deported.

NOT
WELCOME

EVICTION INC.

How one company helps landlords exploit a loophole in New York's tenant laws.

JOSHUA HUNT

ON A MONDAY AFTERNOON LAST SUMMER, RICHARD CABELLO WAS HUNCHED OVER HIS DESK, RIFFLING THROUGH A STACK OF FILES. Each folder was marked with a name, and each of those names belonged to someone whose life he was about to upend—Ryan A., Janelle P., Melissa S. But at the moment, only one file mattered to Cabello, the one labeled "José Torres."

There was nothing remarkable about the folder he'd been looking for. Like the other files in the office, it would never grow much thicker than a pamphlet. A few sheets of paper are all that Cabello needs to do his job, which is summed up by a sign he placed in front of his office that reads, "Tenant eviction done here."

Cabello's company, Quick Evic, is on Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, amid four neighborhoods where housing is increasingly precarious. In Brownsville, where he grew up, 40 percent of the population lives in poverty; in East New York, where Quick Evic does much of its business, the poverty rate is 25 percent, and one-third of tenants live in severely rent-burdened households, spending more than half their income on housing, and in Bushwick and Bedford-Stuyvesant, where gentrification threatens to put housing out of reach for working-class residents, more than 40 percent of tenants live in severely rent-burdened, low-income households. In Brooklyn, the median rent has gone up about 10 percent in the six years since Cabello founded Quick Evic, allowing the company to expand aggressively. In 2014 it brought in $20,000 in revenue, which ballooned to more than $300,000 by 2017. In 2019, despite a decline in the rate of evictions throughout the city, Quick Evic saw no decline in its business, bringing in more than $300,000 in revenue for the third consecutive year, according to Cabello.

It was Cabello's efforts to drum up business in Bed-Stuy that led me to his front door. One morning in June, while walking down Lexington Avenue, I passed a boarded-up brownstone with a black-and-white placard affixed to the plywood that blocked its entrance. On it was an illustration that showed a landlord kicking a tenant to the curb, with text that read, "Tenant Problems? Call Quick Evic!"

The sign disturbed me. New York's housing crisis has had grave consequences for the city's most vulnerable tenants. In 2018 researchers at New York University found that people from low-income households, once evicted, face an increased risk of homelessness and are more likely to end up in the emergency room. And the problem is not limited to large cities like New York. Across the US, there are nearly a million evictions every year.

I know firsthand how traumatizing this experience can be. When I was in elementary school in rural Alaska, I returned home one day to find an eviction notice on our door, and before long, a sheriff's deputy was piling our belongings on the curb next to last week's trash. A few years later, after moving to Oregon, my mother, who was raising five children on her own, got sick, missed several days of work, and fell behind on the rent. We lived for months in churches and shelters. Eviction and homelessness as I'd known it were a far cry from the eviction experience portrayed on Quick Evic's sign, which showed two white men dressed in fine suits, distinguishable as landlord and tenant only because they were labeled.

In Brooklyn the median rent has gone up about 10 percent in the six years since Cabello founded Quick Evic, allowing the company to expand aggressively.

IN JUNE 2019, AROUND THE time I first heard of Quick Evic, Democrats in the state legislature were pushing through a bill with radical implications for housing in New York City. The Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019 placed a cap on the value of improvements that landlords could pass on to their tenants and strengthened protections for some 2.4 million New Yorkers living in privately owned, rent-stabilized apartments. Overnight, hundreds of thousands of people living in rent-regulated units were granted a reprieve from the threat of eviction.

It was a rebuke to the legislature's recently ousted Republican majority, which had, for more than two decades, allowed New York's housing policy to be set largely by developers. In exchange for funding the campaigns that kept Republicans in office, developers got the housing policies they wanted—and what they wanted, above all else, was to erode rent control protections.

New York's rent control laws, introduced during World War II, were designed to ensure that service members returning from combat could find affordable housing—something that would have been difficult otherwise, given how little building went on during the war. For decades, rent control protections worked mostly as intended. While developers focused on building luxury condominiums and commercial spaces, the owners of older, rent-regulated buildings could count on a 6 percent return on their investment, with allowances for reasonable rent increases as the value of the property rose.

However, the Rent Regulation Reform Act of 1993 weakened rent control protections by gutting registration requirements for landlords, allowing property owners to more easily ignore the rules without the state knowing. The Rent Regulation Reform Act of 1997 gave developers additional concessions, courtesy of Republican lawmakers, who had recently taken control of the legislature. The law scaled back rent control protections so swiftly that by 1998, the number of Manhattan apartments being deregulated more than doubled. It

QUICK EVIC
LANDLORD TENANT
Tel: 347-251-1427

Richard Cabello began his career in real estate helping the homeless find apartments. Now he helps landlords push tenants out.

JOSHUA HUNT

Joshua Hunt is a journalist and the author of University of Nike: How Corporate Cash Bought American Higher Education.

also allowed landlords to raise rents by 20 percent on vacant units, incentivizing them to force out old tenants, regardless of whether they paid their rent on time. Under these conditions, older multiunit buildings in Manhattan, which once provided landlords with modest returns and tenants with affordable housing, became attractive investment targets for banks, hedge funds, and speculators.

Over the course of a decade, investors gobbled up Manhattan. And because buyers could obscure their identities by purchasing property through shell companies, Manhattan real estate became as attractive to the world's millionaires and billionaires as properties in London or Hong Kong, where criminals and oligarchs have long invested, hidden, and laundered money. The United Nations Human Rights Council, in a 2017 report on the financialization of housing, called these markets "hedge cities," where global capital drove housing prices "to levels that most residents cannot afford." This created "huge increases in wealth for property owners in prime locations while excluding moderate and low-income households from access to homeownership or rentals due to unaffordability." Those denied access to housing were "pushed to areas with scant employment" and "made vulnerable to predatory lending practices and the volatility of markets." The result of all this, the report concluded, was "unprecedented housing precarity."

Those denied access to housing, the report found, were "pushed to areas with scant employment" and "made vulnerable to predatory lending practices."

In the decade since Manhattan became New York's first hedge borough, investors have started to turn Brooklyn into its second. They began with Williamsburg, where properties now sell for more than $2,000 per square foot. The process continued in rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods like Bushwick and Bed-Stuy and showed no signs of slowing until 2018, when a new crop of progressives wrested control of the state legislature from Republicans. Vowing not to take money from developers, these Democrats set about strengthening rent control protections in precisely the way developers had long feared. Last June, the Democrats succeeded: The Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019 was meant to make it harder for landlords to evict tenants from rent-regulated properties and put apartments on the open market with much higher rents. So far, the law seems to be working. By November, an analysis conducted by *The Wall Street Journal* showed a 46 percent decline in eviction cases in New York City, with 35,000 fewer than there were in the same period the previous year.

KENSINGTON REALTY
APARTMENT
FOR RENT

Rising rents: In the decade since Manhattan became New York's first "hedge borough," investors have started to turn Brooklyn into its second.

DREW ANGERER / GETTY IMAGES

WHEN I FIRST MET CABELLO IN JULY, A month had gone by since Democrats passed this landmark legislation, and I was eager to hear how much trouble it was going to cause him. But instead of downsizing his eviction-for-profit business, he was expanding it.

"We just moved into this office," he told me when I arrived at Quick Evic's headquarters. "We needed a bigger space."

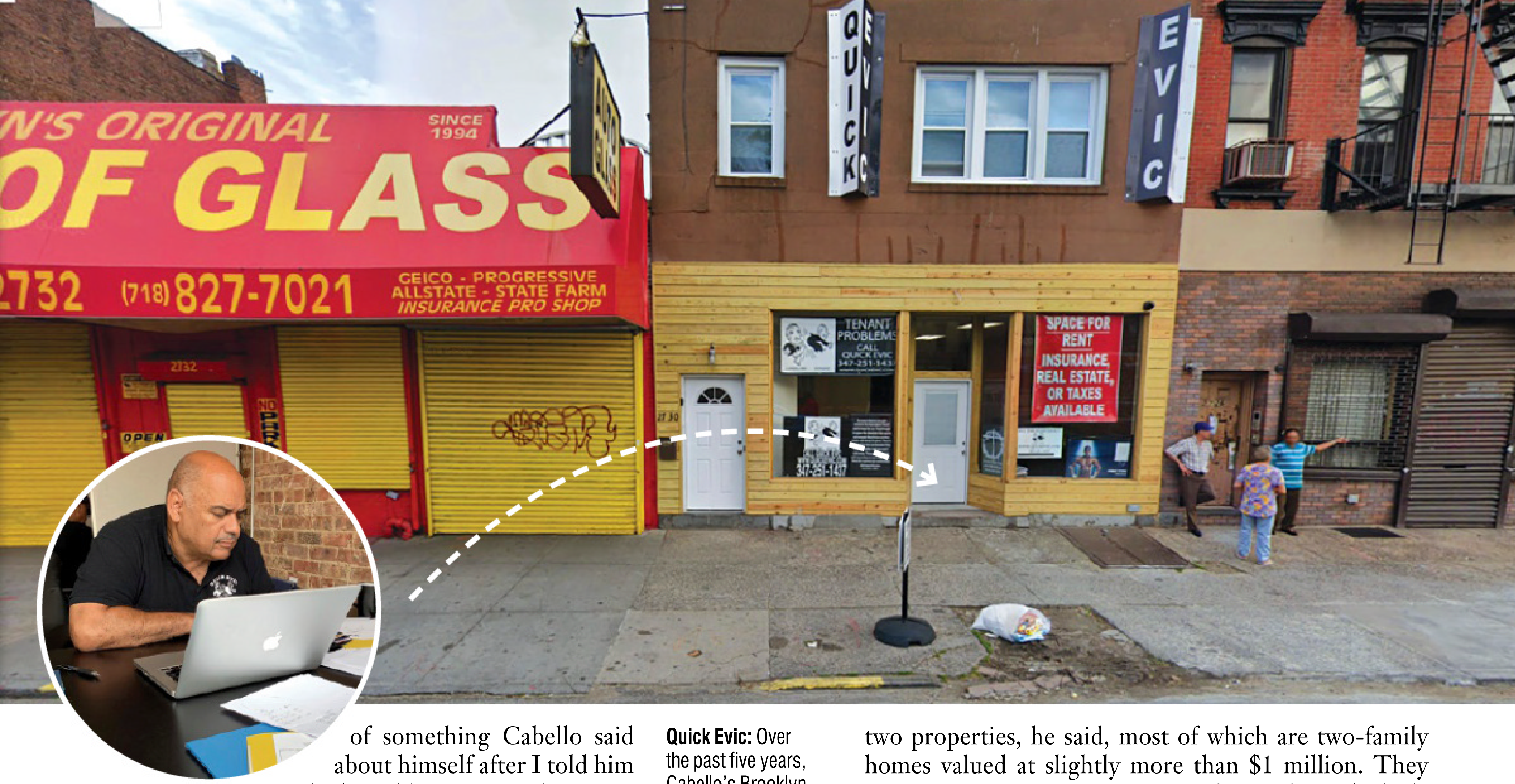
Like a professional wrestler, he is content to play the heel. Cabello, who is 69, wore black pants and a black polo shirt with a Quick Evic logo printed on its left breast. He has a stout build, shiny bald head, and calm demeanor, except when his phone rings, which it does incessantly. His office, where he spends most of his time, is halfway between the housing projects where he grew up and the home he now lives in and owns.

When he was 15, Cabello's family moved from Puerto Rico to Brownsville, where he saw how racism, finance, and government policies could bring down a neighborhood. White families flocked to the suburbs, banks stopped guaranteeing mortgages, and properties fell into disrepair as housing projects became associated with crime and poverty. He earned a degree in accounting and then, as this process began to reverse itself, he became a real estate agent to profit from the steady rise in Brooklyn properties.

It was a side hustle at first, but Cabello eventually left his accounting job to work full-time as an agent. His specialty, for more than two decades, was helping those who had been living on the streets and in homeless shelters. This was business, though, not altruism. Such people qualified for city, state, and federal programs offering subsidies to landlords willing to rent to them. And these tenants, Cabello noticed, often had experienced years of instability and sometimes had trouble paying the portion of the rent they were required to cover. So when they got evicted, their landlords would go back to Cabello looking for someone new, which meant another commission.

During Cabello's years as an agent, Darma Diaz, a director at New York's Department of Homeless Services, referred many people to him. She said that at the time, he seemed eager to help families transition away from the shelter system but in retrospect she decided he was a "cold-blooded opportunist" who found people homes when it was profitable and kicked them out of those homes as soon as he realized how much more money could be made.

"He's nothing but a paper pusher," Diaz said. This struck me as eerily similar to something another person said about Cabello, but at that moment, I couldn't recall who it was. I realized later that I was thinking



Quick Evic: Over the past five years, Cabello's Brooklyn-based company has helped evict some 1,000 New Yorkers.

of something Cabello said about himself after I told him I had trouble imagining how anyone could look people in the eye, put them out on the street, and sleep soundly.

"Oh, I never look these people in the eye," Cabello said. "To me, they're just a name on some papers I file with the court."

Eviction is a largely bureaucratic exercise. In New York, for example, the process usually consists of four steps. In cases of eviction for nonpayment of rent, it begins with a written demand for the rent owed; if landlords want the tenant out for other reasons or no reason at all, they must issue a holdover notice. And from this point forward, all that's left is a court filing, a judgment from the court, and the execution of the eviction warrant.

Cabello's innovation, if it can be called that, was to recognize how many New York landlords are amateurs, with no facility for paperwork—the kind of people who inherited property or bought an extra home as an investment. He knows this because he, too, was once an amateur, he said. In the 1990s he lost a property he owned in Bed-Stuy after his tenants (for reasons he won't say) banded together in a "mutiny" and refused to pay their rent.

"I couldn't pay the mortgage, and I didn't have no money for an attorney," Cabello said. "So I lost the house."

The decor in Quick Evic's office suggests that he still carries a grudge. The windows are lined with what might be called anti-inspirational quotes, which seem to add up to an ideology built around one basic idea: If a Puerto Rican immigrant can grow up hard on the streets of Brownsville and make something of himself, then why can't you pay your rent? One such quote is from the boxer Mike Tyson, another Brownsville native, reads, "Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the face."

And yet he insisted that the landlords he works with are often barely scraping by. Typically, they own one or two properties, he said, most of which are two-family homes valued at slightly more than $1 million. They are, once rising property taxes are factored in, "the little guys," according to Cabello.

> "Developers, when they want to knock down some brownstones to build condos, **they hire a big law firm to evict old tenants.** The little guys come to me."
>
> —Richard Cabello

NOT
WELCOME

"Developers, when they want to knock down some brownstones to build condos, they hire a big law firm to evict old tenants," he said. "The little guys come to me."

If Cabello really believes that the "little guys" go to him for paperwork alone, he underestimates himself. In truth, he's not just a paper pusher; he's a counselor, a confidant, and at times, the ultimate bad influence, offering landlords advice about how to act on their very worst impulses. And for all this, they pay him $300 per filing, or $1,200 in total if their case goes the distance. For Cabello, this has proved to be a profitable formula. In the past five years, he has helped evict about 1,000 New Yorkers, earning revenues of approximately $1 million. And he's not the only one profiting from eviction. In addition to Cabello and his competitors, there are law firms specializing in eviction on the mass scale required by developers and owners of large property portfolios and eviction support agencies like Undisputed Legal Inc., which provide those law firms with process servers and even private investigators.

IN AUGUST I SPOKE WITH COLETTE FREMONT, A landlord Cabello described as one of his success stories. A few years ago, she said, she hired Quick Evic to rid her of "the worst tenants in the world." It began, as many of these situations do, with a standoff over problems with water and heating. The tenants refused to pay until repairs were made, and Fremont refused to invest money on improvements while she was owed rent. When she went to Cabello, her tenants owed eight months of rent, but because they had a legitimate grievance, she could not legally evict them. Still, Cabello had a plan.

"Richard told me, 'You have got to get them to a point where they are so pissed off at you that they do something stupid,'" Fremont said. She began by sending her husband around for regular visits aimed at antago-

INSET: EUGENE M. JOSEPH

HOUSING JUSTICE FOR ALL
EVICT YOUR LANDLO
HOUSING JUSTICE FOR ALL
BILLS

Housing justice: Tenants and housing advocates demand that New York Governor Andrew Cuomo and state legislators strengthen rent protections in June 2019.

nizing her tenants. He showed up at odd times, she said, and did his best to instigate arguments. Then she started calling the police and even the mayor's office to report what she viewed as illegal behavior at the residence, to no avail.

"They were selling marijuana. They were smoking marijuana. But apparently that's legal now," she said.

Then one day, "it worked," she said. "One of them beat up my husband and got arrested."

Cabello advised Fremont's husband to get an order of protection and then move into the unit above the tenants' rental, thereby causing them to be in violation of that order by living in proximity to him. The tenants, who could not be evicted through standard channels, abandoned their apartment, just as Cabello predicted they would.

I was stunned that Fremont and Cabello seemed to consider this story an endorsement of Quick Evic and its methods. I was even more stunned when, after describing her role in this actual conspiracy, she justified her behavior with an invented one: She said her tenants had been in league with Jewish bankers and developers who are seeking to cheat black landlords out of their property.

"These tenants, as soon as they find a violation, they refuse to pay," Fremont said. "The courts work for the tenants, who don't pay, then the bank forecloses or the owner is forced to sell to these developers. The ones who are making money are the Jews. They are the masterminds."

Her evidence for this, she said, was that a Jewish real estate agent left her his card at one point during the eight-month standoff with her tenants. But in the end, she kept her property, won a $14,000 judgment, and with Cabello's help, found new tenants. In the aftermath she, like most of Cabello's clients, evangelized on his behalf and helped Quick Evic find new landlords in need of his services.

Cabello hears from a few of them each day—landlords like Ehsanullah Ashrati, who bought a four-unit apartment building in Brooklyn's Cypress Hills neighborhood last spring and decided to get rid of all the tenants, even though they paid their rent on time. By June, they were all gone, except for the tenant on the third floor, José Torres.

On a bright, chilly Friday afternoon in October, I visited Brooklyn Housing Court, where approximately 50,000 eviction cases are decided each year. In a cavernous room on the sixth floor, a judge heard one eviction case after another, for hours on end, with only five minutes scheduled for each hearing. Schedules posted throughout the courthouse showed that every other judge hearing eviction cases had a similarly hectic schedule. In a large waiting room where tenants gather with their paperwork and await their chance to challenge their eviction before a judge, there was not a single white man, and no one wore a fine suit like the bad tenant in Quick Evic's ads.

Most of them were represented by members of the Legal Aid Society, like Nakeeb Siddique, who works there as a supervising attorney. On that afternoon, like most afternoons, he was overwhelmed by the number of clients in need of his services and could hardly find five minutes for an interview. In the precious few moments he could spare, I learned that he had never heard of Quick Evic. This is by design. Cabello uses at least five attorneys to file his paperwork with the court, so there is no paper trail that leads from court documents back to him. Most tenants never know that a professional helped put them out of their apartment.

"We're really glad about the new tenant protections," Siddique said. "But as you can see, those protections don't help everyone."

> "We're really glad about the new tenant protections. But as you can see, those protections don't help everyone."
>
> —Nakeeb Siddique, attorney, Legal Aid Society

One group of people who are not helped by the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act are those who live in buildings with fewer than six units. Brownstones like the ones found all over Brooklyn, for example, are typically two-unit dwellings, and their tenants are not afforded any additional protections under the new laws; in fact, such buildings are more or less exempt from any form of regulation, based on the assumption that they are the province of mom-and-pop landlords.

Cea Weaver, an activist and tenant advocate who was instrumental in pushing through last summer's rent control reforms, told me this is one of the more significant loopholes in what are otherwise some of the strongest tenant protections in the nation. "We're fighting to expand tenant protections so that all housing in New York is covered," she said. "In the short term, that means we have to urgently pass good-cause eviction—simple legislation that would protect tenants from price-gouging rent hikes and from frivolous or unjust evictions."

In the housing court waiting room, one tenant after another told me they lived in a brownstone, duplex, or three-unit apartment above a ground-level business. These were the tenants, I realized, who account for the bulk of Cabello's business; he told me during our first meeting that his clients mostly owned "two-family dwellings," though the significance of that term hadn't

THIS PAGE: HANS PENNINK / AP; OPPOSITE PAGE: EUGENE M. JOSEPH

yet dawned on me. Now that it had, I set out to find some of these tenants.

CABELLO WAS, UNDERSTANDABLY, LESS WILLING to put me in touch with his victims than with his clients. But he was also careless with his paperwork, which he left spread across his desk during our interviews. Occasionally, I'd glimpse a name and an address, which I'd have to read upside down, since the papers faced away from me. I wrote down as many as I could, and after compiling a short list, I started knocking on doors. I began with José Torres.

The building on Fulton Street was close enough to Quick Evic's office that I worried Cabello might hear us shouting to each other. "The intercom is broken," Torres yelled down from the window of his apartment. "Who are you, and what do you want?"

I shouted up at him, "I'm a journalist reporting on eviction, and I've just learned that you're about to be thrown out of your apartment. Can we talk?"

He asked me to wait a few minutes, then met me on the sidewalk in front of the building. His apartment was small and messy, he said, but if I didn't mind walking with him to a neighborhood branch of the Brooklyn Public Library, we could talk along the way. Torres is a few years younger than Cabello, but he looks older. He walked slowly because of nerve damage from diabetes, which has left his legs plump and purple.

By the time I found him, Torres had already received his eviction notice. His new landlord had been direct with him: Despite the fact that he paid his rent, Torres and all the other tenants in the building would have to go because the landlord wanted to make a fresh start, with all new tenants.

> **"You see a place like San Francisco, and you got all these people living in the streets, and people who are well-to-do, making $60,000, are sleeping in their car."**
>
> —Cabello

"I understand that he wants me to move out, and I definitely should move out, just because he's the new landlord and I need to respect his wishes," Torres said. "The only thing that's holding me back is that I have funding from a city housing program, so I need to find a new apartment where the landlord is willing to deal with that program."

The voucher program he used helped New Yorkers living in homeless shelters find permanent housing. Torres resided in a shelter for a year before he moved into the apartment on Fulton Street.

"I'm probably going to end up back there while I look for a new apartment," he said. "It's very hard to get out of those places, because everything is working against you. You spend weeks filling out applications, then while you're waiting for landlords to call you back, someone steals your cell phone while you're asleep."

At the library Torres collected two books he had on reserve, and then we headed back toward his apartment. Recently, I stopped by his building again, but no one answered the buzzer. The apartment that had freed him from life in a homeless shelter was once again vacant, and the cell phone number he gave me no longer worked. I walked to Quick Evic, where I found Cabello sitting in his office. I asked him what he thinks New York City will look like in five or 10 years.

"You know what scares me?" he answered. "Sometimes you see a place like San Francisco, California, and you got all these people living in the streets, and people who are well-to-do, making $60,000, are sleeping in their car, joining a gym so they can shave and take a shower in the morning.... I'm afraid that's what New York is going to be like."

For a moment, I stared straight through Cabello. Just as I was about to remind him of his role in all this, he added, "Someday, one of those developers is gonna hire a big law firm to come and evict me." ■

This article was supported by the Economic Hardship Reporting Project.

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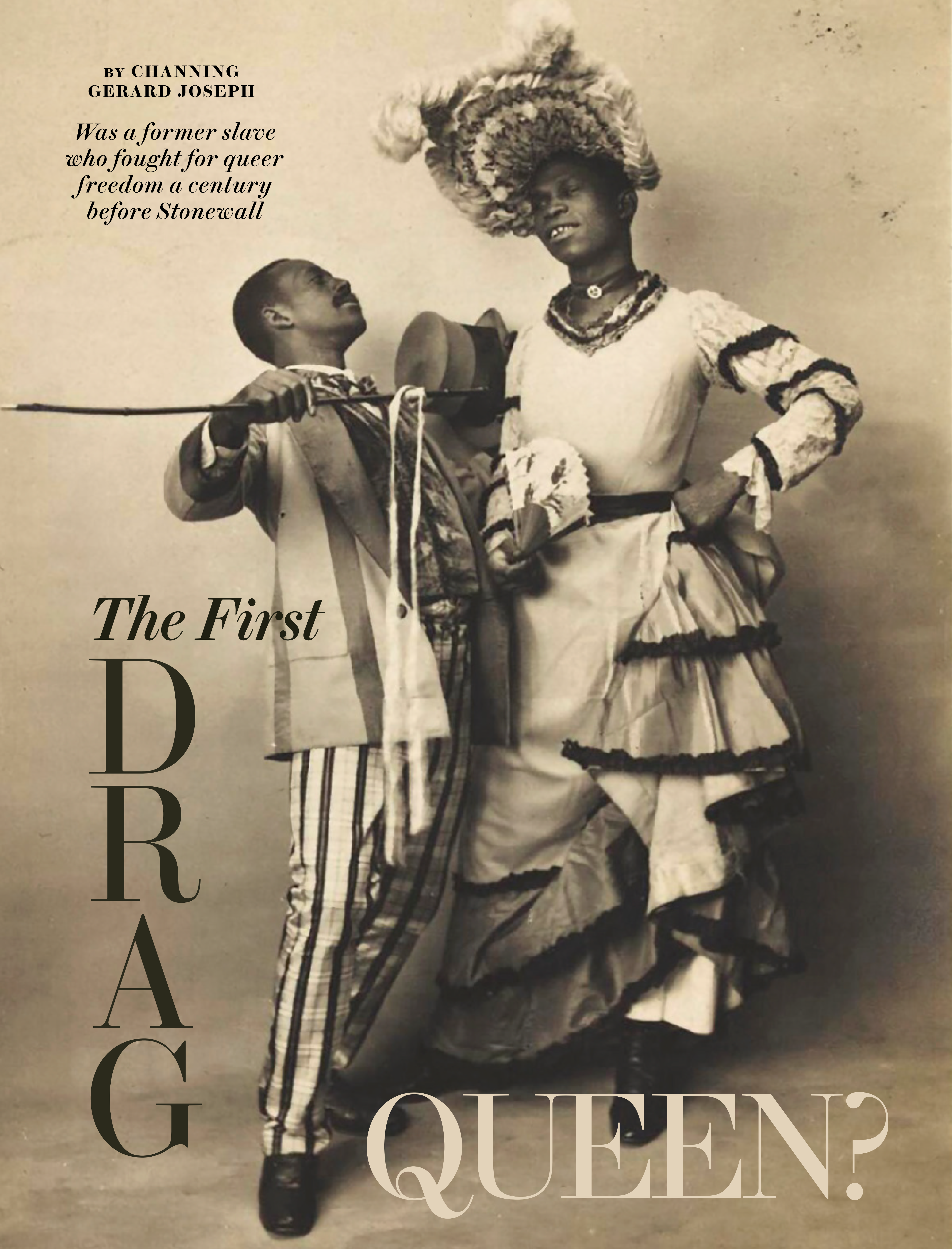
Sign of the times: A Quick Evic banner hangs across the street from a men's shelter at the Bedford-Atlantic Armory in Brooklyn.



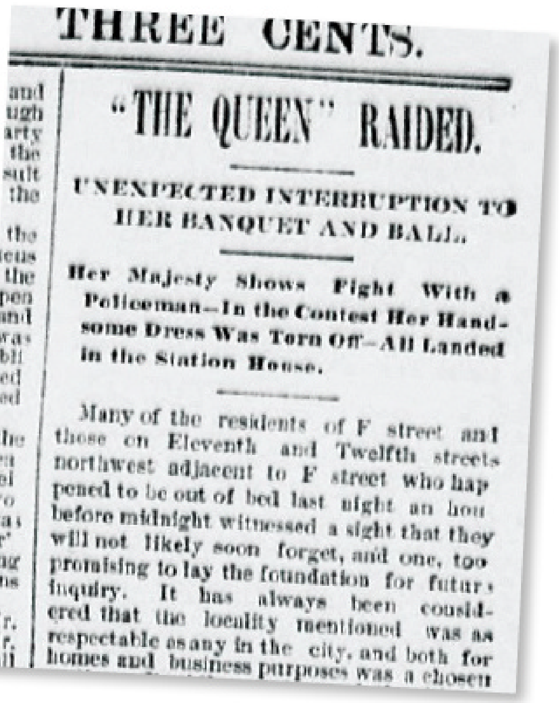
BY CHANNING GERARD JOSEPH

Was a former slave who fought for queer freedom a century before Stonewall

The First DRAG QUEEN?

His name was William Dorsey Swann, but to his friends he was known as "the Queen." Both of those names had been forgotten for nearly a century before I rediscovered them while researching at Columbia University. Born in Maryland around 1858, Swann endured slavery, the Civil War, racism, police surveillance, torture behind bars, and many other injustices. But beginning in the 1880s, he not only became the first American activist to lead a queer resistance group; he also became, in the same decade, the first known person to dub himself a "queen of drag"—or, more familiarly, a drag queen.

In 1896, after being convicted and sentenced to 10 months in jail on the false charge of "keeping a disorderly house"—a euphemism for running a brothel—Swann demanded (and was denied) a pardon from President Grover Cleveland for holding a drag ball. This, too, was a historic act: It made Swann the earliest recorded American to take specific legal and political steps to defend the queer community's right to gather without the threat of criminalization, suppression, or police violence.



THREE CENTS.

"THE QUEEN" RAIDED.

UNEXPECTED INTERRUPTION TO HER BANQUET AND BALL.

Her Majesty Shows Fight With a Policeman—In the Contest Her Handsome Dress Was Torn Off—All Landed in the Station House.

Many of the residents of F street and those on Eleventh and Twelfth streets northwest adjacent to F street who happened to be out of bed last night an hou before midnight witnessed a sight that they will not likely soon forget, and one, too promising to lay the foundation for futur inquiry. It has always been considered that the locality mentioned was as respectable as any in the city, and both for homes and business purposes was a chosen

Unmasked: Publicity, like this 1888 article in *The National Republican*, exposed William Swann and his friends to danger.

When I tell people that I'm writing a book about the life of a former slave who reigned over a secret world of drag balls in Washington, DC, in the 1880s, the looks of shock, delight, and even confusion on their faces tell me all I need to know.

My research on Swann began 15 years ago, when I stumbled upon a *Washington Post* article from April 13, 1888. The headline leaped off the page: "Negro Dive Raided. Thirteen Black Men Dressed as Women Surprised at Supper and Arrested." According to another news account, more than a dozen escaped as the officers barged in and Swann tried to stop them, boldly telling the police lieutenant in charge, "You is no gentleman." In the ensuing brawl, the Queen's "gorgeous dress of cream-colored satin" was torn to shreds. (The fight was also one of the first known instances of violent resistance in the name of LGBTQ rights.)

To 19th century observers, Swann's dance party was a shocking and immoral fiasco perpetrated by a vanishingly tiny minority of "freaks." *The National Republican*, another Washington daily, said of the men arrested in the raid, "It is safe to assert that the number living as do those who were taken into custody last night must be exceedingly small." Yet, despite their minuscule numbers, they made quite an impression: Hundreds of onlookers followed the men to the station to steal a glimpse of silk and skin.

In post–Civil War America, there was very little patience for men who subverted gender norms.

That spring night in 1888 wasn't the first time the DC police had broken up one of Swann's dances (nor would it be the last). A similar raid occurred on the night of January 14, 1887. *The Washington Critic* dutifully reported, "Six colored men, dressed in elegant female attire, were arraigned in the dock at the Police Court this morning on a charge of being suspicious persons.... They nearly all had on low neck and short sleeve silk dresses, several of them with trains," as well as "corsets, bustles, long hose and slippers, and everything that goes to make a female's dress complete."

Drag balls had been going on in secret for years. Invitations to the dances, for instance, were often whispered to young men at the YMCA, and newspapers described the arrests of several black men wearing "bewitching" fascinators, silk sacques, or cashmere dresses while en route to balls. In 1882, Swann served a jail term for stealing plates, silverware, and other party supplies. But the 1887 raid was the first time the wider world learned of him and the motley group of messengers, butlers, coachmen, and cooks.

Swann's drag balls came with grave risks to his guests' reputations and livelihoods. A large but undetermined number managed to flee during the police raids, but the names of those arrested and jailed were printed in the papers, where the men became targets of public scorn. With the news coverage, the world took an interest—everyone from neighbors and police to local officials and even psychiatrists. Now that the group was publicly known, it would prove to be a fascinating new subject for researchers trying to grapple with the complexities of human sexuality and psychology. Lacking any of the terms we use today, like "cross-dresser," "transgender," and "gender-nonconforming," Dr. Charles Hamilton Hughes described Swann's group in an 1893 medical journal as an "organization of colored erotopaths" and a "lecherous gang of sexual perverts." Another psychiatrist, Dr. Irving C. Rosse, described them as "a band of negro men with…androgynous characteristics."

On the one hand, the publicity made it more difficult for Swann and his friends to stay hidden from those who sought to do them harm. On the other, now that their existence was widely known, more people might have been interested in joining his secretive all-male family.

Swann's gatherings continued, featuring folk songs and dances, including the wildly popular cakewalk (so named because the best dancer was awarded a hoecake or other confection). Many guests dressed in women's clothes, though some wore men's suits. Harlem's famous Hamilton Lodge masquerade balls, which began in 1883, were traditional masked dances and would not be "taken over by the gentry from fairyland," as one *Baltimore Afro-American* reporter colorfully put it, until 1925 at the very earliest.

The actions of Swann and his followers were particularly significant in light of 19 century attitudes toward masculinity. At the start of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln, glossing Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, urged an apprehensive nation to "go forward without fear, and with *manly hearts*" (emphasis added) to fight a war that would eventually lead to full citizenship for all black men. In 1879, the *Evening Star* reported that the abolitionist Frederick Douglass advised that "with a full complement of *manly qualities* the negro could and would make himself respected in every part of the republic." In post–Civil War America, there was very little patience for men who subverted gender norms.

Channing Gerard Joseph, a journalist and historian, was recently awarded a 2019 Whiting Creative Nonfiction Grant.

On April 16, 1862, Lincoln signed the compensated Emancipation Act, freeing all slaves in the District of Columbia. In the years after that, Washington came to be seen by newly liberated African Americans as a place of freedom and economic opportunity. Swann and many others in attendance at his balls were born in bondage, and many probably expected to live out their lives that way. Some of his friends vividly remembered growing up and coming of age in the antebellum years, when they were subject to their masters' whips and whims. Finding love and joy in community with one another was essential to their survival.

Swann was the property of a white woman named Ann Murray and was living on her plantation in Hancock County, Maryland, when Union soldiers marched through in the winter of 1862. His intimate friend Pierce Lafayette—whose elegantly furnished two-story home was the site of the 1887 party—had been born enslaved in Georgia. Lafayette had been owned by Alexander H. Stephens, the vice president of the Confederate States of America. (It's interesting to note that Lafayette's prior relationship with Felix Hall, a male slave dubbed Lafayette's "negro Mistress," is the earliest documented same-sex romance between two enslaved men in the United States.) Also, two of Swann's younger brothers attended his balls dressed in women's clothing, demonstrating that the group truly was an extension of his family.

In 1900 and beyond, after William Swann's retirement from the drag scene, his little brother Daniel J. Swann continued the family tradition in Washington. He provided costumes for the drag community there for roughly five decades, until his death in 1954—through the rise and fall of notable black DC drag queens like Alden Garrison and "Mother" Louis Diggs. (By the early 20th century, newspapers in the Baltimore and Washington area had documented the use of family terms to denote rank within groups of ball participants, with "mother" reserved for an older person serving as a mentor to younger ones. The term "queen," though used loosely today, was until the 1960s often reserved for someone in a position of honor and leadership in the community.)

Today, more than a century after William Swann's last known ball, the houses of the contemporary ballroom scene maintain the same basic format as the House of Swann's. The balls feature competitive walking dances with exaggerated pantomime gestures, and they are organized around family-like groups led by "mothers" and "queens." Strikingly, descriptions of balls from the 1930s are sprinkled with phrases like "strike a pose," "sashay across the floor," and "vogue." Such expressions, now part of mainstream popular culture, are regularly heard on FX's *Pose* and VH1's *RuPaul's Drag Race*.

Though the Stonewall uprising of 1969 is often touted as the beginning of the fight for gay liberation, Swann's courageous example forces us to rethink the history of the movement: when it began, where it came from, and who its leaders were. Coming of age at a time when an entirely new form of freedom and self-determination was developing for African Americans, Swann and his house of butlers, coachmen, and cooks—the first Americans to regularly hold cross-dressing balls and the first to fight for the right to do so—arguably laid the foundations of contemporary queer celebration and protest. ■

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HOUSE IMPEACHMENT MANAGERS, 1868: JAMES WILSON, GEORGE BOUTWELL, JOHN LOGAN, BENJAMIN BUTLER, THADDEUS STEVENS, THOMAS WILLIAMS, AND JOHN BINGHAM (© CORBIS / CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES)

POLITICAL IN NATURE

Is impeachment only about getting a conviction?

by STEPHANIE McCURRY

In May 1868, President Andrew Johnson came one vote short of conviction on articles of impeachment. His was the first presidential impeachment in US history, one of only three to date to go to trial. It came in the traumatic aftermath of the Civil War, amid a constitutional crisis over the relative powers of the president and Congress to set the terms of national reconstruction, including establishing the rights of 4 million newly freed African Americans. It remains the closest the country has ever come to convicting a president for "treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors." That Johnson did not get convicted, however, raises its own set of questions. If Congress could not succeed in prosecuting Johnson, is there reason to think it might never succeed in convicting a president? Given the political dynamics and consequences of the process, is there perhaps a better measure of success for impeachment than removing a president from office?

Impeachment has always been an obscure process. Article II, Section 4, of the Constitution identifies it as the ultimate check that the legislative branch has on the powers of the executive. But the article offers only minimal guidelines for the kind of behavior that merits impeachment or the process of adjudicating it. It states that "the President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors." Treason and bribery are straightforward enough, but the catchall category of high crimes and misdemeanors allows for a wide scope of transgressions. What the founders had in mind, Alexander Hamilton explains in *The Federalist Papers*, was "the misconduct of public men" or, in other words, "abuse or violation of some public trust." Impeachment, therefore, was the remedy not only for corruption and treason but also for other abuses of power. For this reason, it was "denominated POLITICAL" in nature and thus posed difficulties in terms of enforcement. A trial for impeachment would never be an ordinary trial. Prosecutors (from the House of Representatives) would have wide latitude in defining the offenses, and

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Stephanie McCurry teaches history at Columbia University and is the author, most recently, of Women's War: Fighting and Surviving the American Civil War.

in the absence of a jury, judges (the Senate) would have an "awful discretion" in deciding the case. To complicate matters, sometimes political neutrality would be in short supply. "In such cases," Hamilton noted, "there will always be the greatest danger that the decision will be regulated more by the comparative strength of parties, than by the real demonstrations of innocence or guilt."

That essential prediction has held true over the course of impeachment's history and is no less true in 2020 than it was in 1999 or in 1868. The danger that House members might use impeachment to target a political opponent pointed to the potential utility of impeachment as not so much a legal proceeding as a political one. Its inescapably partisan nature is the reason the founders set a high bar for conviction, but it also suggests the underlying value of the process as a powerful check on executive power and an expression of political will by the dominant party in the legislative branch.

Brenda Wineapple's new book, *The Impeachers: The Trial of Andrew Johnson and the Dream of a Just Nation*, presents a timely discussion of the Johnson affair and, more generally, the extended standoff between the president and Congress that triggered the process. As the title suggests, Wineapple is more interested in the impeachers and the trial than in the larger political stakes of the fight; for her, the whole matter is often quite literally a drama of personalities. The book starts by introducing its "Dramatis Personae," the cast of characters in the 1868 play "The Impeachment Trial of President Andrew Johnson," and it continues in this vein, presenting Johnson's impeachment as a national tragedy, albeit one with elements of farce. In a series of very short chapters—some only seven pages long—she lays out the historical background, the impeachment process, the trial, and the verdict, weaving essential information in and around brief character sketches and colorful quotations from the key players.

Wineapple's mode of narration offers an engrossing play-by-play account of the action, but at points it is not entirely suited to the task of providing the context and nuance needed to understand Johnson's trial. His virtually Trumpian mode of braying and baiting political speech comes through loud and clear, as do all manner of personality conflicts that Wineapple sees as bearing on the outcome. But readers might have a more difficult time grasping the scope and scale of the historical problem between Congress and the president that brought them to the point of impeachment in the first place. The existential struggle between Johnson and congressional Republicans was primarily a dramatic clash not of personalities but of fundamental ethical and policy differences about the meaning of the Civil War, the terms of the country's reunification, and the very future of American democracy.

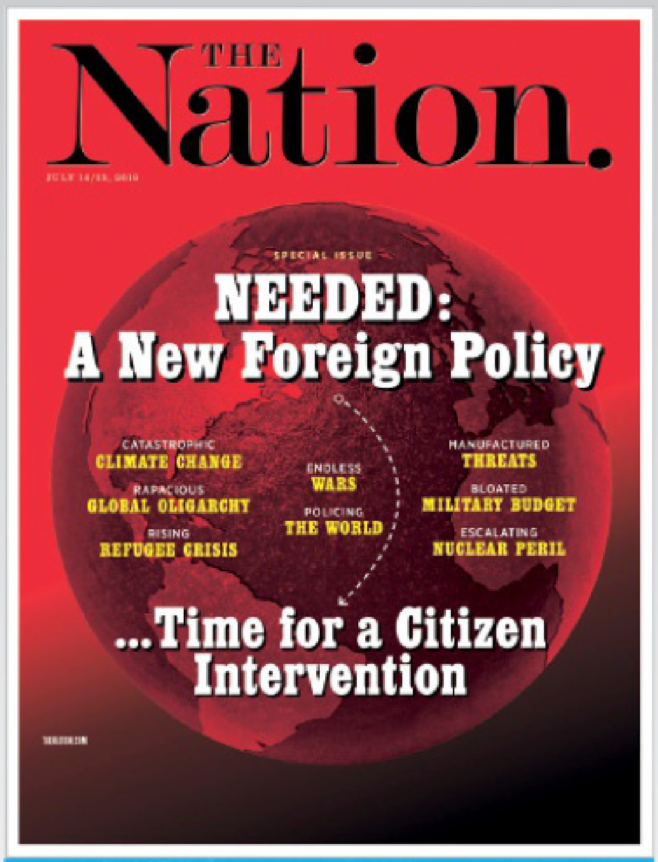
The Impeachers
The Trial of Andrew Johnson and the Dream of a Just Nation
By Brenda Wineapple
Random House. 576 pp. $32

Among US presidents, Andrew Johnson was uniquely vulnerable to impeachment and conviction. He was a Southern Democrat added to the Republican ticket in 1864 as Abraham Lincoln's running mate in a wartime coalition, an "accidental president" elevated to the chief executive's role by an assassin's bullet. For his entire time in office, Republicans held veto-proof majorities in both the House and the Senate. Yet whatever Republican support Johnson began with, he quickly lost as a result of his self-aggrandizing exercise of presidential power and his Reconstruction policies, which empowered the defeated Confederates. For eight months he refused to convene Congress, attempting a quick reintegration of the former Confederate states entirely on his own (lenient) terms. When Congress finally reconvened in December 1865, the House refused to seat the white supremacist Democrats returned under his watch. By the end of 1866, even moderates in the Republican Party had abandoned him. In response, Johnson tried to woo Democrats by playing to their racism. But that didn't work, either. By 1868, the Republican Party wanted nothing more to do with him, and neither did the Democrats, who put Horatio Seymour at the head of their ticket in the upcoming presidential election. By the time Johnson was impeached that spring, he was a man without a party and, as we would now say, without a base—a very different and far more exposed position than that of Richard Nixon, Bill Clinton, or Donald Trump, all of whom had their party behind them, at least at the start of the process.

There is no question that, as Wineapple puts it, "one of the chief architects of Andrew Johnson's impeachment was Andrew Johnson." He was, to put it mildly, temperamentally unsuited to the office: The nation's 17th president rivaled its current one in his penchant for race-baiting and his shockingly coarse expressions and views. "Andrew Johnson was not a statesman," Wineapple writes in a masterstroke of understatement. Instead, he was a man "with a fear of losing ground," an "obsession to be right," and a need to humiliate his enemies when "seeking revenge" on them. (And Johnson was certainly prolific in creating enemies, routinely denouncing the people who opposed him as "traitors" and "enemies of the people.") He also spoke of himself in the third person ("They are ready to impeach him") and specialized in self-promotion and self-pity. No man in the history of the office, he proclaimed, had ever been so "traduced and abused."

Johnson had very little in the way of political charisma. The more the public saw of him, the less it liked. In the fall of 1866, on the eve of the midterm elections, Johnson set out on a disastrous speaking tour that came to be known as the "Swing Around the Circle." He stumped for Democrats, attempting to build support for himself as the leader of a new Democratic coalition. In the immediate aftermath of massacres of African Americans in Memphis and New Orleans that shocked the nation, he egged the Southern Democrats on, campaigning against ratification of the 14th Amendment and urging Southern legislatures to hold the white supremacist line. But his craven cultivation of racists failed to win him a following, even as it further alienated or antagonized moderates of the Republican Party, legislators and voters alike. Heckled by hostile audiences, Johnson would lash out at his constituents, denounce Congress as a "rump" parliament, threaten to hang the Republican leader Thaddeus Stevens, and liken his situation to the agonies of Jesus—public statements that would all be cited in the articles of impeachment. Ulysses S. Grant, who had been forced to accompany Johnson on the tour, called him "a National disgrace" and at one point bailed on the tour. By its end, Republicans were united against him. "Was there ever such a madman in so high a place as Johnson?" asked Henry Raymond of *The New York Times*. After the midterms, talk of impeachment got serious.

Yet Johnson's demonstrable unfitness for office can go only so far in explaining his impeachment. After all, impeachment did not immediately follow the midterm elections. First there needed to be a constitutional crisis over the power of the legislative branch to set national policy. The Republicans' determination to impeach and remove Johnson turned on irreconcilable ethical and political differences about the terms of freedom and citizenship in the reunited nation more than it did on any difference in temperament and personality. By 1868, when the House wrote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the articles of impeachment, Johnson had vetoed or campaigned against three signature pieces of Republican legislation: the Civil Rights Act, the 14th Amendment, and the Military Reconstruction Acts. Passed in 1866 and '67 in response to provocations by Johnson and the Southern legislatures, each act was more radical than its predecessor. The Civil Rights Act established national birthright citizenship (though it still excluded Native Americans) and reversed the Supreme Court's *Dred Scott* decision, which denied the claim of citizenship to all people of African descent. The act also guaranteed equality in civil rights, striking down the discriminatory "black codes" by which Southern states had limited the terms of freedom for African Americans. The 14th Amendment rendered those gains permanent in the Constitution, extended equal protection of the law to all citizens, and penalized Southern states for withholding the franchise from African American men by reducing their representation in Congress. The Military Reconstruction Acts were by far the most radical and confrontational. In the face of white Southerners' unrepentant refusal to extend even basic civil rights to African Americans (as well as the campaign of white supremacist violence against them, which was already taking organized form in the Ku Klux Klan), the legislation carved up the former Confederate states into five districts and returned them to military rule. Those states would not be readmitted to Congress until they ratified the 14th Amendment and wrote new state constitutions enforcing its terms. The Military Reconstruction Acts thus intended what the 15th Amendment would later do—introduce black male suffrage—but earlier and by military fiat. Johnson vowed to obstruct them. This set impeachment in motion.

Despite its sure grasp of the biographical elements of the story, *The Impeachers* fails to take the proper measure of these acts and the constitutional crisis of which they were a part. The Civil Rights Act was not radical at all, Wineapple says, but "merely granted citizenship to all persons born in the U.S." along with basic civil rights. Of the Military Reconstruction Acts, she opines that "the only real objection the Southern states might have…would be the granting of suffrage to black men." They certainly did object to black suffrage—violently so, as the next 50 years of Southern history attests. But there was nothing modest about national citizenship or equality under the law, either. Congressional Republicans knew white Southerners would never concede to that unless compelled, and so executing the first two bills required the passage of the third. After a brutal civil war, renewed military occupation was the nuclear option, but enforcing black men's right to vote would require precisely that: a virtual revolution in representation and, as W.E.B. Du Bois pointed out long ago, nothing short of the reconstruction of democracy itself in the United States.

Congressional Republicans thus expected presidential obstruction. On the same day they passed the Military Reconstruction Acts, they also passed the Tenure of Office Act, which barred the president from removing high-ranking appointees without Senate consent. It was written specifically to constrain Johnson's ability to sack his secretary of war, Edwin Stanton, who could be trusted to enforce military reconstruction. Wineapple identifies the Tenure of Office Act as a "legal pretext." But it was more than that. Stanton and the act were the congressional Republicans' insurance against Johnson's obstruction of their Reconstruction policy—or, as the articles of impeachment put it, his failure to uphold his oath to enforce the nation's laws.

Eleven months later, on February 21, 1868, Johnson fired Stanton, in violation of the Tenure of Office Act. When the news arrived, the House and Senate went into special session and moved immediately to impeach. On February 24, Stevens delivered the impeachment papers to the House. After a day of debate and for the first time in American history, the House of Representatives voted to impeach a president. Speaking last, Stevens framed impeachment as the only available means to curb a president intent on denying the legitimacy of Congress's role in government. In such a case, he argued, the framers relied not on the "avenging dagger of a Brutus" but on the "peaceful remedy [of] impeachment." The resolution passed the House in a landslide, 126-47. Every Republican voted in support; no Democrat did.

The 11 articles brought against Johnson introduced a curious pattern that appears to have held across time. In most cases to date—Johnson, Nixon, Trump—the articles of impeachment were drawn narrowly, positing a strange relationship between the formal charges on which presidents were (and are) tried and the larger context of political corruption or abuse of power that provoked Congress to act. In 1868, the first eight articles focused on Johnson's violation of that obscure Tenure of Office Act (which was repealed in 1887). The ninth involved a related charge about a military appropriations law that he had encouraged an officer to disobey. All of those articles involved violations of laws that had been recently and specifically written to curb the power of the president to obstruct congressional reconstruction. The last two articles, written at the insistence of Stevens, cut a wider swath. They identified impeachment as the only remedy for a chief executive who, by repeated violent speech (itemized at length in Article 10), sought to deny Congress the exercise of its "rightful authorities and powers," and in the process, through behavior "peculiarly indecent and unbecoming in the Chief Magistrate of the United States…brought the high office of the President…into contempt, ridicule and disgrace."

According to the articles, Johnson was guilty not of treason or bribery but of a series of "high crimes and misdemeanors in office." All of Johnson's "unlawful" and impeachable acts involved the violation of his oath of office to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed." Starting in 1868, debate raged as to whether impeachable acts had to meet the standard of being indictable offenses. In this first, foundational case, the decision of the impeachers was that they did not.

After the House voted to impeach, Senate Republicans moved with equally impressive speed. Within 10 days, Johnson was summoned to appear, and the Senate convened under Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase as a court of impeachment for the trial. Johnson never did appear; the entire proceeding was conducted in his absence. The country had no precedent for this situation; as Wineapple observes, "No one knew what to do." Offering a vivid account of the way the chief justice seized control of the process and arranged the rules to reserve power for himself, Wineapple explains that Chase insisted the Senate be organized as a court of law, meaning that the presiding judge would rule on the admissibility of evidence and the reliability of witnesses; he also awarded himself the right to cast the deciding vote in the case of a tie. There were procedural challenges to those arrangements during the trial, but Chase mostly prevailed.

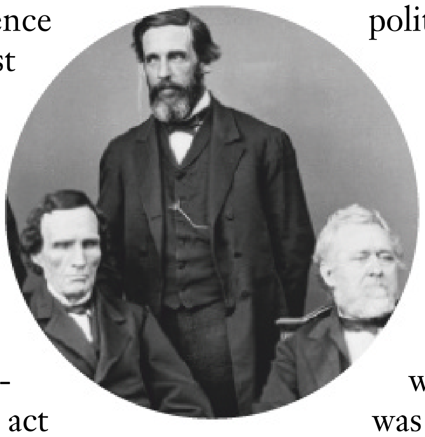
By Wineapple's account, the fix was thus in by the time the trial began. Chase's views concerning the illegality of military government were on record. And because Johnson had no vice president, the next in line for the presidency was House Speaker Ben Wade, a Radical Republican and the only US politician quoted by name in Karl Marx's *Capital*.

(Indeed, Wade was so radical that he supported women's suffrage.) "Wade, then, in the Executive Mansion? Not a chance," Wineapple writes. As a result, the potential removal of Johnson proved "too frightening" for many. But even if the moderates were looking for a way out, Senate Republicans had so few defections that they came within one vote of conviction.

The impeachment trial was brief; arguments by the prosecution and defense extended over 17 days. The president had a brilliant defense team of five lawyers, including a former Supreme Court justice, Benjamin Curtis; Johnson's attorney general, Henry Stanbery (who resigned from the cabinet to serve on his legal team); and the New York lawyer William Maxwell Evarts, who after the trial was rewarded with an appointment as Johnson's next attorney general. They faced seven House managers making the case for the prosecution. That team included Stevens and Benjamin Butler, one of the best criminal lawyers in the country, who delivered the prosecution's opening statement. The defense called 16 witnesses, one of whom—no less than Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman—testified to a conversation with the president that undermined the defense's position that Johnson had removed Stanton for the express purpose of testing the Tenure of Office Act in court.

In making their case, the defense lawyers focused on the constitutionality of Johnson's actions. Their tactics were twofold. They both attacked the constitutionality of the Tenure of Office Act and denied that it applied to Johnson, who had not appointed Stanton. Johnson had thus broken no laws, they argued. As now, so in 1868: The president's defenders insisted there was no indictable crime. It was a position Butler explicitly rebutted in his opening remarks. An impeachable offense or "misdemeanor," he said, was one that subverted the principles of government or that abused or usurped power. Conviction, he added, did not have to reach the same high legal bar as in a criminal case; a preponderance of the evidence was sufficient to prove guilt. And either way, Butler insisted, Johnson had broken a law, the Tenure of Office Act. If he didn't want to execute that law, Stevens argued, Johnson should have resigned. But as Stevens himself noted, the breach of law was not what the impeachment was ultimately about. The "real issue was reconstruction" and the succor Johnson had given to rebels still "unwilling to create a free and fair country" for black citizens as well as white. Stevens knew that the impeachment hearings were a necessary part of the larger political struggle to constrain the president. What was at stake was who would get to control the course of Reconstruction.

In the end, every Senate Democrat voted "not guilty," and 10 Republicans joined them. Most were moderates who recognized the political nature of the proceeding and thought the failure of impeachment was ultimately good for the party and in particular for Grant's chances in the upcoming election, at that point only six months away. There is hard evidence of corruption against at least one of those Republicans, Edmund Ross of Kansas—ironically, a man singled out for praise by John F. Kennedy in *Profiles in Courage* precisely for his willingness to buck his party. But almost everyone else voted along party lines: Impeachment was an act of partisanship and principle.



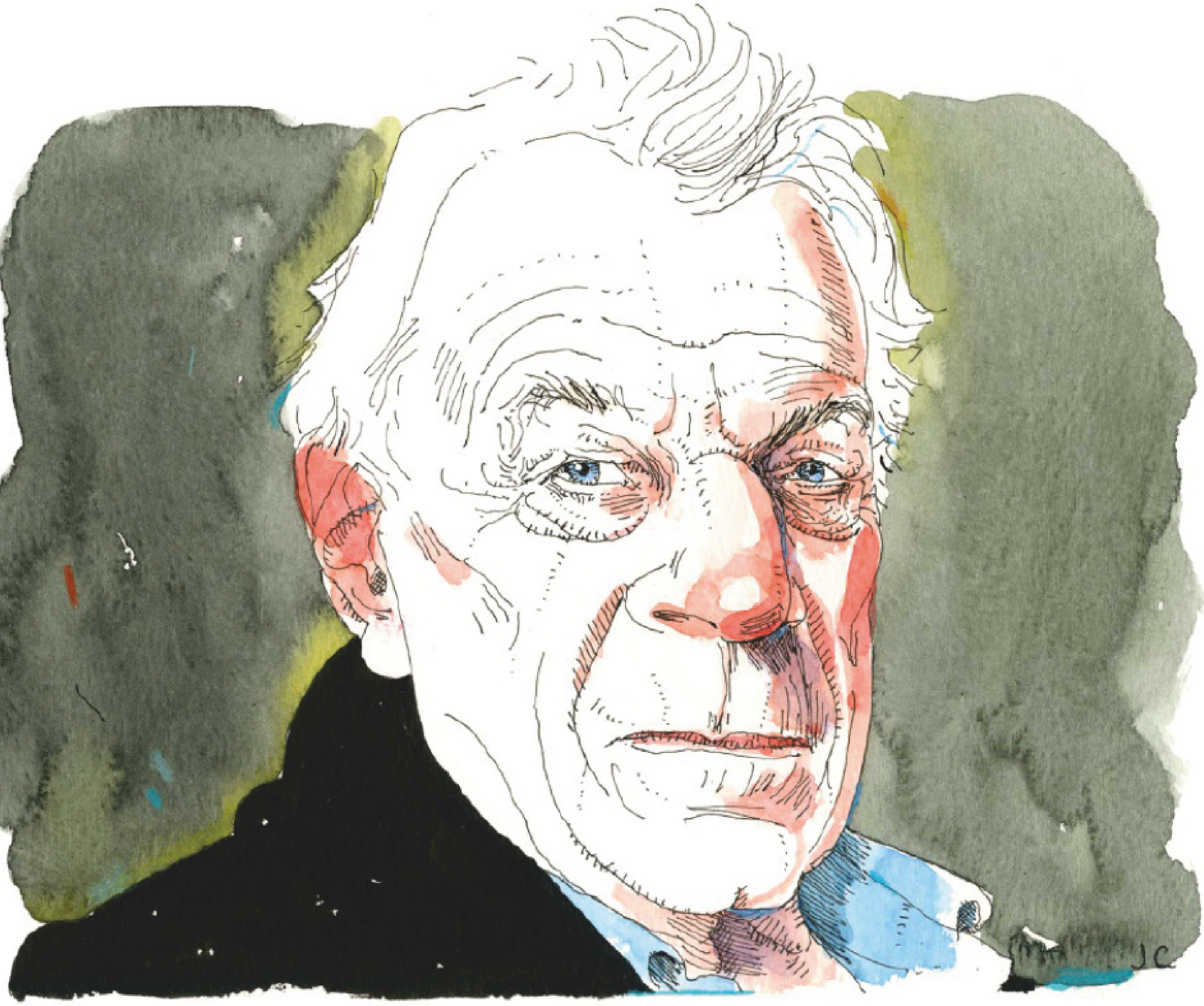
As the impeachment trial of the country's 45th president proceeds apace, there are several things one can take away from Johnson's precedent-setting case. The first is that there will always be a high bar for conviction. In his closing argument in 1868, Evarts indicated what the standard should be. Remove the president, he asked, for what crime? "Had Johnson surrendered a fleet? Abandoned a fort? Betrayed the country to a foreign state? Fleeced the government?" Any of those would be a clear case; Johnson's was not. By those standards, though, we appear to have one now.

The second is that there is always a reluctance to convict, and not just in the president's own party. Too many people are afraid of what it would mean to vote to remove a president, even one grossly unfit for office. In 1868, men like Evarts and a handful of Republicans voted against conviction less in defense of the president than of the presidency. They were interested above all in the questions of executive power and the separation of powers in our constitutional system.

These are issues that have been central to every case of presidential impeachment. The Republican John Bingham, who delivered the closing argument against Johnson for the House managers, cared about the Constitution and the checks and balances on which American government rests. "The President had taken the law into his own hands," Bingham insisted, and so had to be impeached and removed. "The President is not a King and cannot…disregard the Constitution and its provisions," he continued. No man in the United States was "above the law…. No man lives for himself alone, 'but each for all'. Some must die that the state may live," and thus "position, however high, patronage, however powerful, cannot be permitted to shelter crime to the peril of the republic." It was a powerful argument then and remains one, but that doesn't change the fact that in a democratic system the protection of constitutional principles requires a mobilized political defense.

There is one more conclusion we can draw about 1868: Johnson may not have been convicted by the Senate, but his Republican impeachers nonetheless did win the battle over Reconstruction, and in this way impeachment was a success. After Johnson was acquitted, Republicans passed their most radical acts yet, holding their coalition together long enough to enact the 15th Amendment, which guaranteed adult male citizens the right to vote regardless of race, and the Enforcement Acts, by which they successfully used federal power to suppress the Ku Klux Klan. They also saw the election of Grant as president in 1868 and managed to hold off the Democratic white supremacist overthrow of radical Reconstruction into the 1870s. These were no mean achievements, and Wineapple's *The Impeachers* helps us to see how Republicans won in the end, even though they failed to remove the president.

In *The Wars of Watergate*, Stanley Kutler writes that "impeachment was perceived as analogous to nuclear weapons: available, yet too dangerous to use," which, if true, also means that invoking the power to impeach is itself a meaningful act. Impeachment is not likely to become a routine tool of partisan warfare. To date, it has been used only four times (including against Nixon, who resigned before articles of impeachment were voted on). In the wars over Reconstruction, when the questions on the table were as fundamental to democracy as they come, the decision to impeach Johnson was a critical demonstration of political will. Impeachment might not have been the most dramatic or important of the Republicans' actions. But as a tool to constrain executive abuse of power and as a way to publicize dissent on matters of policy and principle, it suggests that impeachment itself is the measure of success, however remote the likelihood of conviction. ■



WAYS OF BEING

John Berger's life between aesthetics and politics

by BRUCE ROBBINS

"So vegetables are politics now!" The line is pronounced by a character in Alain Tanner's 1976 film *Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000*, a film that bids farewell to the political hopes of 1968 but somehow manages to be upbeat. John Berger, the English art critic, novelist, and universal man of letters who cowrote the film with Tanner, also managed to sustain an almost magical political buoyancy in the grim and uncertain years that followed the '60s—and, like the character in Tanner's film, he seems to have done so in part through vegetables, as well as animals, relocating so as to live in proximity to both.

I met Berger in Geneva a couple of years after the film came out. At the time, he was living in the French Alpine village of Quincy. There were already whispers about how, after the heady 1960s, his work had become too nostalgic for the apparently disappearing simplicities of peasant existence, and the day I met him he did nothing to dissuade me of this view. He was speaking, in torrential French, at the launch of an exhibition of Jean Mohr photographs of mountain villagers. I don't remember much of what he said, except that, like Mohr's portraits, he found in his neighbors a nobility that otherwise seemed to be lacking in modern life. In a café afterward, he invited me to Quincy. I was looking forward to the visit with embarrassing eagerness, but it was not to be. Before it could be arranged, I wrote something on the nostalgia question, beginning with an examination of *Pig Earth*, Berger's newly published account of French peasant experience. I sent him a draft and got a letter back signed by his wife, Beverly Bancroft. The letter was slightly ambiguous: He hadn't read it, and he didn't like this sort of thing. That was the end of our budding relationship.

Berger had arrived in the Alps after a sensational debut in London. As Joshua Sperling tells the story—and it *is* a story, with a plot and peripeteia—in his sharp, moving, and immensely readable new book, *A Writer of Our Time: The Life and Work of John Berger*, Berger's career began when he

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Bruce Robbins teaches at Columbia and is the author, most recently, of The Beneficiary.

ILLUSTRATION BY **JOE CIARDIELLO**

gave up his ambition to be a painter after World War II and almost instantly made himself a loud and provocative voice on the London art scene. (The usual phrase is “enfant terrible.”) He didn’t pull this off by the originality or consistency of his left aesthetic. At first, he championed socialist realism (for example, the so-called Kitchen Sink painters) in a Popular Front kind of way, distancing himself from modernist elitism and abstraction. But by 1965 he was praising Cubism as “the only example of dialectical materialism in painting,” an abstraction that was needed in order to see the destructive as well as the creative potential unleashed by modernity. Never a member of the Communist Party, Berger was close enough in his positions to pass and to be attacked, both as a Soviet stooge and—after he’d abandoned some of them—as a sellout and a running dog of the decadents.

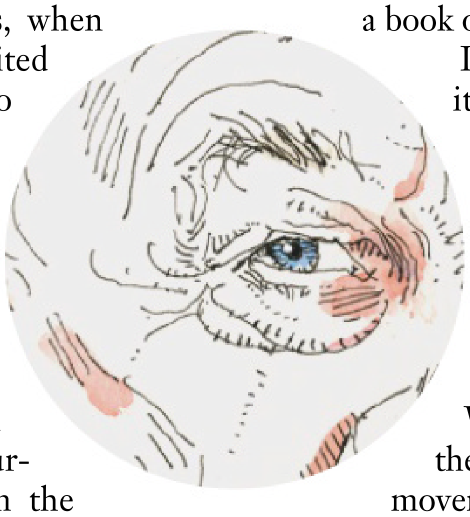
In these early years, Berger grabbed the spotlight not as a theorist but as a polemicist, picking fights with the establishment, happy to take on whatever it happened to be saying and whoever personified it in his mind. (Kenneth Clark was a particular bête noire.) According to Sperling, Berger needed an opponent in order to get himself going. The oedipal pattern is inescapable in *G.* (1972), Berger’s Booker Prize–winning update of the Don Juan myth, in which the protagonist falls for women who always seem to be the property of older, richer, and more powerful men. Indeed, one aspect of Berger’s later retreat to the domain of vegetables and animals is that by then, he was trying to find his way toward a way of living and a politics that no longer required the incitement of male rivalry. In this stage of his career, Sperling suggests, giving his plot its biggest twist, Berger became less political, more appreciative of the beauties of art and of life.

Sperling has a point. Like others of his generation, Berger certainly suffered from a dashing of his revolutionary hopes. And yet he was never tempted by a depoliticized aestheticism. Throughout the various stages of his long and astonishing career, beauty and commitment were always intimates.

Born to middle-class parents in London in 1926, Berger was sent to a boarding school in the country at the age of 6. He hated it, and he left at 16, just as London was being bombed, for an art school in the city. In 1944, when he was old enough to join the army, he did. Refusing to apply for an officer’s commission, as his class origins seemed to dictate, Berger was stationed in Northern Ireland, where he spent two years bunking with the barely literate working-class recruits and, so the story goes, often serving as their scribe. The war experience helped politicize him; it also gave him subjects for his art. After the war, his first paintings were of men doing manual labor. “It was the collective spirit of the home front and of postwar reconstruction,” Sperling writes, “that nourished his early socialism and cultural convictions.”

A Writer of Our Time
The Life and Work of John Berger
By Joshua Sperling
Verso. 304 pp. $29.95

Art proved to be an important arena in which Berger could advocate for his socialist and cultural convictions; it was, he insisted, a weapon in the “culture wars” of the era. Only with the passage of time would art become something else, and for the moment, that something else didn’t interest him. Meanwhile, politics was in flux: The events of 1956, the year of the Hungarian uprising and its Soviet suppression, drove many of Berger’s generation away from communism and politics. But 1956 was also the year of the Suez crisis, when Israel, France, and the United Kingdom invaded Egypt to regain control of the Suez Canal and depose Gamal Abdel Nasser, who had nationalized it. Coming after the Bandung Conference of nonaligned nations, this fresh assertion of Western colonial force—halted, perhaps surprisingly, by pressure from the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Nations—suggested not only that the left could not give up its political commitments but also that the struggle, no longer defined by the binaries of the Cold War, now demanded creative and critical engagement with both the West and “the rest,” in particular the world’s newly decolonized or still colonized territories. For the emergent New Left, this would mean not disillusion but realignment.



A new internationalism was beginning to emerge, sure of its anti-militarism but of little else. How much of modernity was the European left called upon to repudiate from the moment when the divide between the country and the city (Raymond Williams’s terms) was now being played out on a global scale, with Europe cast in the role of modern metropolis? A certain confusion, an alienation from accustomed roles within domestic politics, seemed inevitable.

In the early ’60s, Berger moved to Geneva, where his third wife, Anna Bostock, a double refugee (from Russia and Austria) and a brilliant translator of left-wing writers like Lenin and Trotsky, got a job with the United Nations. This self-imposed exile did not entail any neglect of realities at home. Collaborating with Mohr, Berger wrote *A Fortunate Man* (1967), a beautiful study of an English country doctor whose strenuous intimacy with the physical and mental suffering of his rural patients makes him a sort of model for the intellectual who gets his hands dirty. Berger also published two novels and acquired a solid foundation in a set of European authors, then still untranslated into English, who would soon help define the British New Left, in particular Walter Benjamin and Georg Lukács, whom Bostock translated. Berger drew inspiration from her other translations as well: the writings of Ilya Ehrenburg, Wilhelm Reich, and the Austrian dissident communist Ernst Fischer, author of *The Necessity of Art*. Together, Berger and Bostock also translated a book of Bertolt Brecht’s poems.

In art and in politics, “Make it new” became something of a mantra for Berger. At least to him, the newness of ’60s aesthetics and left politics seemed made for each other. “As the New Left grew to encompass the counterculture of the West, the cultural thaw of the East and the anti-imperial movements of the South,” Sperling writes, “Berger came back to the modernists with a newfound certainty that the historical ice age separating past and present was melting.” This meant the art of the past—especially but not exclusively the recent modernist past—was, in his view, now of enormous political importance. “Though revolution failed to come on schedule even where conditions for it were thought to be ripest, the anticipation of its imagined arrival produced a spark, now distant, whose indirect preservation in art can prevent us from accepting the present as immutable. The paintings may have been like an ark: vessels built to store the hopes of a century before the flood of war.” Thus Berger wrote in a 1967 essay that “the moment of Cubism,” which flourished in the first two decades of the century, is actually now. In

1972, Berger's modest art-scene fame exploded onto a larger stage. First there was *Ways of Seeing*. Before it became a widely and enduringly successful book, probably his best known, it was a revolutionary television series on the unsuspected politics of images, both inside and outside museums, charismatically moderated by the uncannily handsome Berger. Others had noticed the compulsive sexualizing of the female body in Western art and the association between landscape painting and property ownership. Some—notably Benjamin, whom Bostock had translated—had discussed how modern advertising continued the least savory aspects of these artistic traditions. But Berger, opening up and extending Benjamin's esoteric lessons for the instruction of a wider audience, gave these arguments a push so enormous, it can still be felt. This was demystification on a grand, even heroic scale.

In the same annus mirabilis Berger published *G.*, a historical novel (it contains an unforgettable representation of the Milan food riots of May 1898 and their brutal suppression by the Italian military) filled with self-conscious reflections. The events of May 1968 in Paris, a direct inspiration for Tanner, Berger's film collaborator, also worked their way into the novel. The serial seductions carried out by his latter-day Don Juan are presented as acts of liberation, and they are experienced as such by the women he targets, rather than as predation. Today they might map more reliably onto the ambiguous sexual politics of the period, as we have come to perceive it: one part women's liberation, one or more parts male self-indulgence.

Berger's celebrity did not suffer from the accident that threw up two such acclaimed and revolutionary works in the same year or, for that matter, from the newsworthy spectacle Berger made at the Booker Prize presentation ceremony when he reminded the audience, including the judges who were in the act of honoring him, where the Booker family money came from (sugar plantations in the Caribbean, which is to say from slavery) and pledged half his prize money to the Black Panthers.

By the middle of the '70s, Berger was publicly triumphant. Yet it was at this very moment that he chose to retreat from public life and move to a mountain village above Geneva. Sperling does not say—perhaps no one knows—how much that move owed to the breakup of his marriage to Bostock and his new relationship with Bancroft. (Sperling is frustratingly tight-lipped about Berger's romantic life.) But we do learn a lot about his new existence. "Many of his older neighbors continued to live by agrarian methods more or less unbroken for centuries," Sperling tells us, and "Berger started to work alongside them. They became his teachers." Recalling these years, Berger observed, "It was like my university. I learnt to tap a scythe, and I learnt a whole constellation of sense and value about life." Sperling lists the activities Berger participated in—ones involving hay, cows, trees, weeds, apples, and plenty of manure—and notes that "Berger found in the working life of Quincy not only a home but an anchor: a *community*."

According to Sperling, this newly Tolstoyan life corresponds to a momentous shift in Berger's attitude toward art. *Ways of Seeing*, Sperling argues, marked Berger's pinnacle as a demystifier. In the series and the book, he focuses on art as "a social practice to maintain illusions." Yet "almost everything he wrote after *Ways of Seeing*"—most of it composed while he was already living in the countryside—presents art as "a glimpse of what lies beyond other practices." The phrase "what lies beyond" is a bit of a mystery, if not actual mysticism. But Sperling seems right that if demystification was indeed the keynote of Berger's earlier writing on art, then his later writing marked a reversal—which does leave one wondering if Berger, now tapping his scythe in the foothills of the Alps, had decided to cut loose from history even while history kept chugging along. "The truth," Sperling writes, "is that the figure who emerged from the culture wars of the 1970s was a writer defined less by what he was against than by what he loved."

On the subject of what Berger loved and why he loved it, Sperling unfortunately ends up being a bit blurry, as if the things that lie beyond also lie beyond articulation. Yet whatever drew Berger to village life, he seems to have genuinely loved it. Shoveling manure and the other manual duties of animal and vegetable nurture delighted him in themselves while affording him fresh material for description and contemplation. In his essays and books from these years—works like the "Into Their Labours" trilogy *Pig Earth*, *Once in Europa*, and *Lilac and Flag*—Berger found a new subject: the beauty of traditional peasant experience and the tragedy of its displacement by urban modernity.

Love and critique went hand in hand. It's therefore a bit oversimplified to oppose a period of pure love to a period of pure critique. Even as a hypercritical young man,

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After Image

A warm windy day
the window sucks in

with white curtains.
You've left me a specter

whether trace or double
remains to be seen:

blurry photo of fog,
midnight tintype, auto-

corrected fresco—
saucer-eyed retro-

spective Sybil, riddled
with the air there.

KATE COLBY

Berger always found ways of writing about what he loved, and later in life he proved even more resolute in his commitment to the idea that love and criticism required each other. For example, in his essay "Why Look at Animals?" the demystification of zoos depends on a piercing and palpable love of animals as they exist (or existed) outside zoos. In Sperling's view, however, the shift was radical. What changed between 1965's *The Success and Failure of Picasso*, which one critic described as "bent on puncturing the charmed life his prey has been permitted to live too long," and 1967's "The Moment of Cubism" was not Berger's attitude toward art "but rather everything else the art was attached to: the nature of revolutions, the political potentialities of the present, the workings of historical time." Berger had suffered something like a loss or at least a realignment of his political faith, which is what led him to the Alps and to a more positive, less demystifying approach to art. He was, in Sperling's words, on the hunt for an "idealized, rooted *Gemeinschaft*," one that might replace the broken sense of community produced first by the events in Hungary in 1956 and then by the events throughout Europe in the late '60s.

One does not have to be a principled city dweller to wonder whether gemeinschaft was what—or all—that Berger found in the village, a collectivity that (if one glances under the hood) comes with its own array of self-destructiveness, irreconcilable grudges, and an often fatal lack of cooperation. Sperling might also have said more about where Berger's income came from. Even in a book on Berger's life and works, Sperling does not seem to think the sources and quantities of the money mattered. Unlike the peasants of Quincy, Berger was living not just off the land but also off his books. (The other half of his Booker Prize, for example, went into the writing of his 1975 *A Seventh Man*, a collage of text and photographs about the experience of foreign workers in Europe, most of them former peasants. There were also fellowships.) But Sperling does document how Berger found something else on his hillside. During his first years in Quincy he wrote "Why Look at Animals?"—now a staple in the still recent field of animal studies—and the essay says a lot about what he sought and found in the Alpine village. Its most quoted passages show Berger still vividly demystifying the places where the relationship between humans and animals is expected but glaringly absent, like zoos. "The animals," he writes, "seldom live up to the adults' memories, whilst to the children they appear, for the most part, unexpectedly lethargic and dull. (As frequent as the calls of animals in a zoo, are the cries of children demanding: Where is he? Why doesn't he move? Is he dead?)" We look at animals, but they no longer look back. (Here Berger is riffing on his treatment of "the look" in the politics of gender from *Ways of Seeing*.) The relationship between human and animal was far from ideal, but what has replaced it is, for the most part, no relationship at all.

When I read *Pig Earth* in 1979, eagerly but also skeptically, I worried that for Berger, peasant experience was serving as a pastoral refuge for the truly human. I worried that it defied analytical knowledge that did not come from direct experience and, what was worse, that it denied that paradigmatic modern experiences like migration were capable of producing genuine experience. If there are no more peasants, then there would be no more experience. Since that time, however, I have done some backtracking. After all, the peasant way of life, in which the slaughter of animals is artisanal rather than industrial, is not disappearing everywhere. The village where I'm sitting right now has survived various life-threatening assaults—being burned by the Germans in reprisal against the Resistance; losing hosts of its young men to jobs in America and Australia; having its school closed by the government, its potable water diverted and shipped out of the country by a multinational company, its markets and pensions cut to the bone by a banker-imposed austerity regime. But it remains a live village. If petroleum for trucks and tractors (which has to be purchased abroad) could be replaced with solar power, it would be almost self-sufficient. Not that anyone here wants to give up the Internet or the other modes of national and international connectedness they have learned to cultivate over many decades. Still, there are resources here for useful political thought.

It seems absurd to imagine Berger's move as a response to some kind of Kantian moral imperative, as if everyone were enjoined to move to a tiny village and live the way the villagers do in order to preserve the true essence of humanity. However, this is not as silly as it may sound. Peasants, like the world's indigenous peoples, function today as repositories of knowledge that will increasingly be needed as a poisoned, overdeveloped world tries to model sustainable ways of life. When, in the afterword to *Pig Earth*, Berger juxtaposes the goal of "revolution" with that of "survival," he is

Folded Note

It's too cold for the first night
of a new season. All gone,
the neighbors' cars. Are you alone?
Where are they? Perhaps the flight,

the one carrying your daughter and wife,
is delayed? But didn't they go by bus?
Is everything portentous?
Is everything your life?

You're waiting, obviously, for
anything to change: maybe a door
will open, a way through the wall;
maybe a folded note, a surprise call

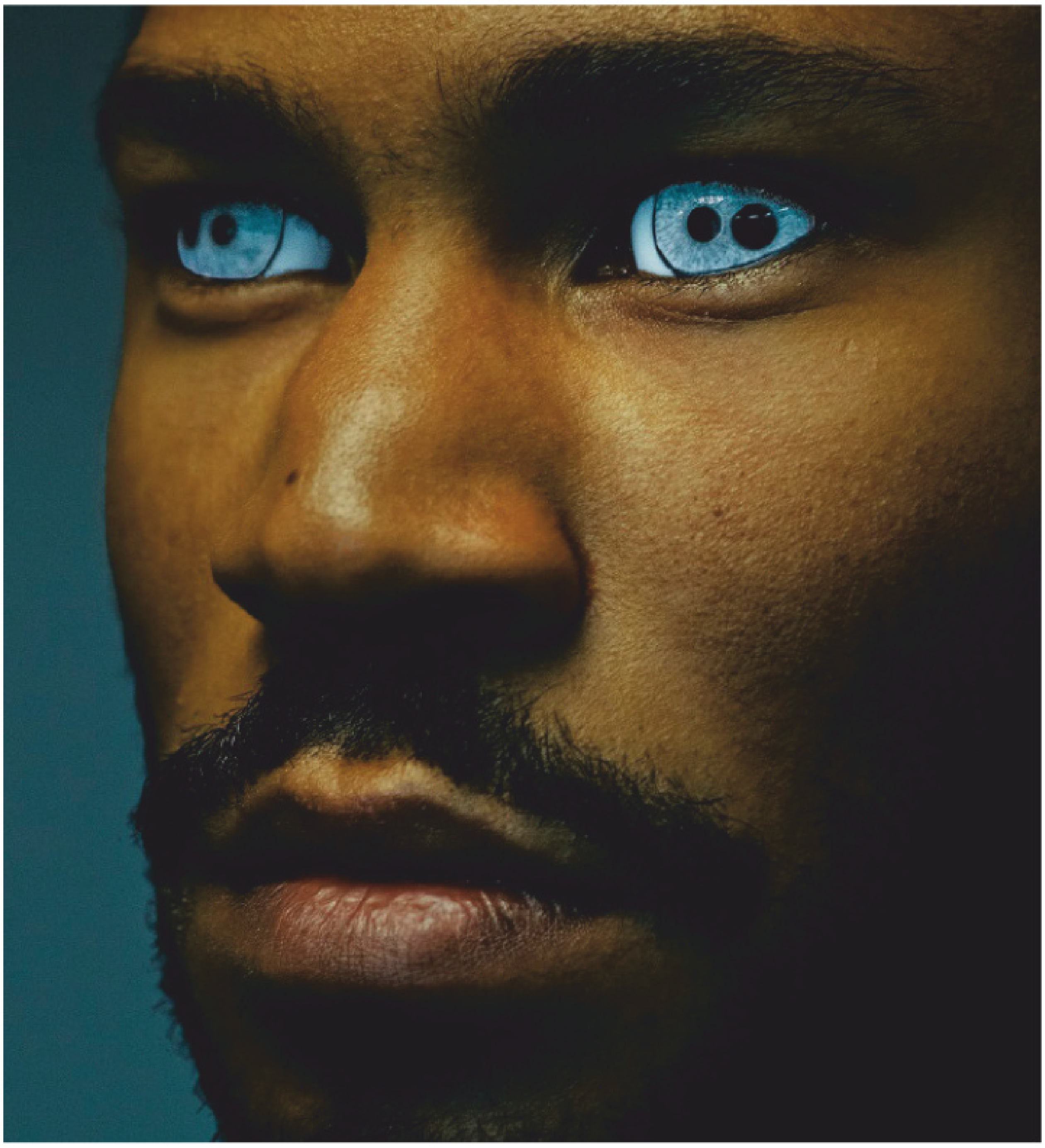
will pry your heart's elastic pocket.
Or not. *Quick*—try to lock it.

CRAIG MORGAN TEICHER

not just speaking about the survival of the peasant way of life; he is also, in a nonnegligible sense, speaking about the survival of humanity. Anyone reading his "Into Their Labours" trilogy today would be obliged to think first and foremost of the climate crisis, the increasingly likely devastation of the planet, and the possibility that the peasant way of life offers the rest of us lessons that are applicable on a larger scale. Whether a revolution would be required in order for these lessons to be applied is another question.

The attractions of small-scale but realized alternatives to actually existing social life were, of course, already a part of the 1960s counterculture. In this sense Berger's move to the Alps was neither all that peculiar nor really a withdrawal at all. He was, like many veterans of the New Left, compromising on long-term goals in order to invest in community, in whatever form and on whatever scale it could be found. It is not entirely surprising, then—though the plot twist is elegant—that at the end of Sperling's book Berger returns to history in the shared, public sense. In 2001, the attack on the World Trade Center and the United States' military response to it appeared to change everything for him; 9/11 allowed Berger to recover his old talents for intellectual and political conflict and to be embraced for his efforts by allies around the world. So the reader ultimately is not asked to choose between the late Berger (aesthetic, mystical) and the early one (political, demystifying). His expressions of solidarity were circulated by appreciative readers in Chiapas, Mexico; in Palestine; and elsewhere around the world. "The militancy of his youth was back," Sperling writes, "and with it the moralism—but also the power." As Tom Overton, an editor of Berger's writings on art, told me, the Milan massacre description from *G.* was read aloud in Palestine.

Berger's own view, expressed toward the end of his long life, rightly suggests that he was never anything other than militant. Everything he wrote, Berger says, was written "during the period of the Wall.… Everywhere the walls separate the desperate poor from those who hope against hope to stay relatively rich. The walls cross every sphere, from crop cultivation to health care.… The choice of meaning in the world today is here between the two sides of the wall. The wall is also inside each one of us. Whatever our circumstances, we can choose within ourselves which side of the wall we are attuned to." ■



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THE WILL TO DANCE

Kaytranada's *Bubba*

by BIJAN STEPHEN

There aren't many albums that you can play anywhere and even fewer that manage to sound appropriate whatever time they happen to be played. What's rarer still: an artist managing to sound right under both of those limiting conditions. The Haitian Canadian producer Louis Kevin Celestin—better known by his stage name, Kaytranada—has managed this feat twice, first on his studio debut, *99.9%* (2016), and then on his recently released (and second) full-length, *Bubba*.

Kaytranada's sound, percussive as it is, feels chameleonic, perhaps because of its virtuosity; he has both an astonishing range and exceptional control, which extends even to his choice of guests. *Bubba*, which was released last December, is a little like the full flowering of a major talent. It launched without much fanfare, and yet since its release, it has become inescapable—at least for me.

Bubba follows the same formula Kaytranada worked through in *99.9%*: He uses featured artists as extra musical textures, even as he lets them paint their lyrical details onto his canvas. Take "Taste," featuring the R&B duo VanJess, which has a chorus that goes "If you want a taste / What you bring to the plate? If you want

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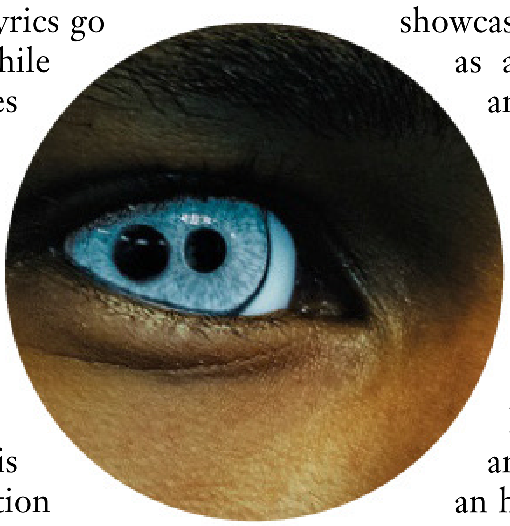
Bijan Stephen is a music critic for The Nation. *His work has also appeared in* The New Republic, The New Yorker, *and other publications.*

a taste / Bring something to the plate." The effect is more trance-inducing than anything else, and it is potent enough to hypnotize a club's dance floor or a freelancer working at his or her favorite café. Because the guests on *Bubba* have been chosen as much for their vibes as for their musical talents, the songs can sometimes be free-associative and imagistic, a collection of scattered scenes. "Culture," which features Teedra Moses, finds the song's protagonist on a search for love but getting tired of looking. "I need a lover / I need someone who understands," the song begins, before it eventually segues into its more forceful chorus: "It's the culture, nigga," Moses sings. Vibes.

A lot of the album's charm comes from that emphasis—on getting what you want and standing up for yourself in the process. The point, the album's often female vocalists stress, is as much to keep people from taking and taking as it is a reminder of when to stop giving. "You keep on taking from me, but where's my 10 percent? / You keep on taking from me / I wonder where you went / You keep on taking from me, but where's my 10 percent? / You keep on taking from me," Kali Uchis sings on the chorus of "10%." And then she offers this devastating line: "You're trying way too hard / Ego is not your friend / I only speak the truth / No, I'm not trying to offend / Why you tryna lie for them?"

It's a good question, one that's never answered or even brought up again. Kaytranada's fixation with sonic texture means that while the lyrics go with the music and while there are consistent themes across the album—love, culture, need, wearing masks, doing what you have to do—*Bubba* never quite coheres, at least in terms of its overall message. Musically, on the other hand, the album grooves. Its sequencing is excellent (with the exception of its closer, the Pharrell Williams collaboration "Midsection," which might have been better left off the album altogether), and the songs slide into each other like track stars handing off a baton. It's a high-wire act, accomplished gracefully. That, however, means there's a bit of lyrical dissonance; the jumps between thematic concerns can be jarring. It's also human: Whose emotions aren't conflicted, at least sometimes?



The jump from "What You Need" to "Vex Oh" is a perfect example. "What You Need" is about the hurt party in a relationship realizing the other person will be the one that got away; "Vex Oh," which features GoldLink, Ari PenSmith, and Eight9fly, tells the story of a guy who finds something compelling about a woman on a night out, sleeps with her, and then takes off the next morning without giving her his number. ("Next morning when we leave, you can switch clothes / Pissed off, you ain't get my number when I hit, though," GoldLink raps, rather convincingly.) They could be tales from the same person at different times in his life, or they could be general dispatches from the front lines of twentysomething desire. Or both. What's clear is the mercurial nature of the emotional landscape Kaytranada depicts; he's tapped into big feelings in a way that's almost specific and personal.

It's not a coincidence that "Vex Oh" is the best song on *Bubba*. It tells the most realized story, and its brash lyrics seem lived-in, as if they're more a product of self-reflection (or therapy?) than outright cruelty. The production is a little faster than on the other tracks, and it's more obviously dub-inflected than anything else on the album. The drums are knocking, propulsive in a way that would seem clumsy except for their extreme precision. The bass line is agile, nearly prehensile. The vocals here, too, are front and center—clear and unhurried in their delivery. It's much more than the sum of its parts; it's a showcase of Kaytranada's talents as a producer, an arranger, and a composer.

Bubba is a dance album. It's meant to be physical, to be felt all over. There is a momentum to this album that's hard to shake. Most of the time when I put it on, I start at the beginning and find myself, just about an hour later, listening to the end. That's a rare accomplishment in the age of the Spotify playlist and the SoundCloud hit. Though that might also be because of what Kaytranada has captured here: the easy, confident intimacy of a group of people dancing in the middle of a party, when nobody has to go home yet and the party's just getting started. When the night seems it could stretch out forever. ■

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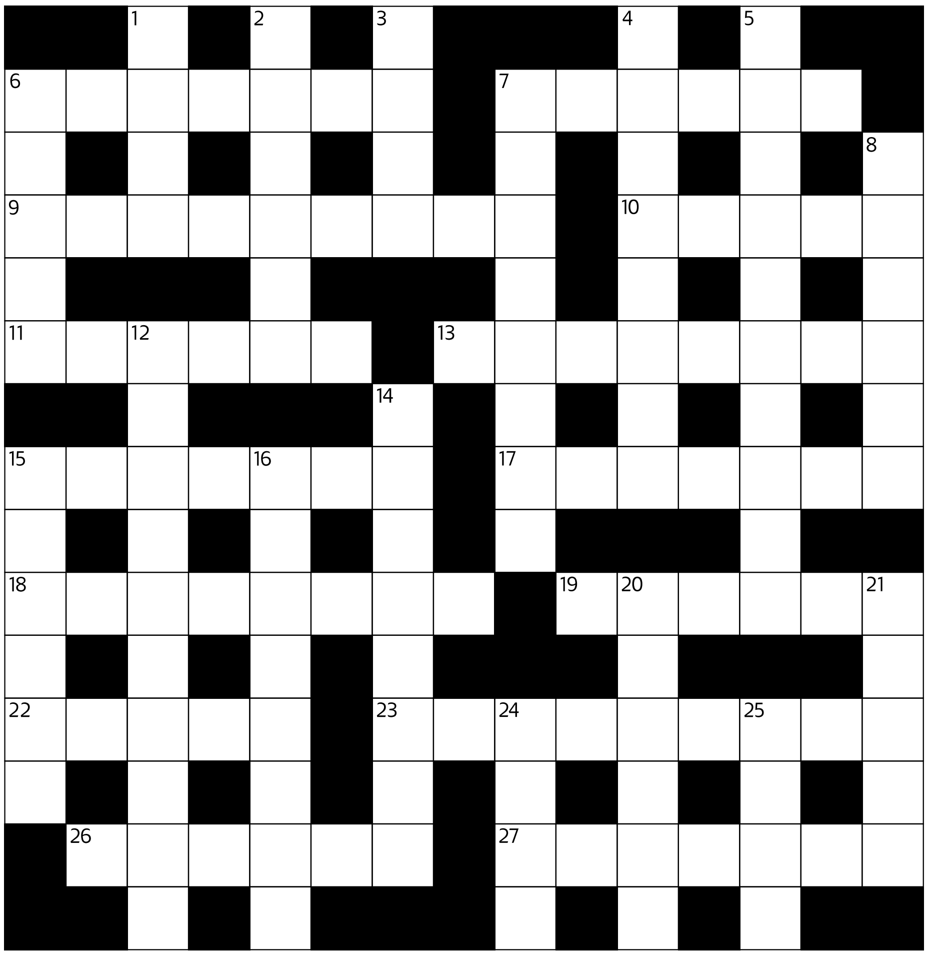

ACROSS

6 Cure something you'd want to beat with a club (7)

7 Alloy could be auctioned off, only more so? (6)

9 Bush and Fleischer introducing explosive statement about military conflict (3,2,4)

10 Software engineer's fish, only more so? (5)

11 Officer telephoned, only more so? (6)

13 Engineer barges in to obtain positional knowledge (8)

15 Application of occasionally furrowed features, only more so? (7)

17 A rector abused God (7)

18 Luggage overturned in Euripides (Act I, usually) (8)

19 Exhausts our group, beginning to eat (have dinner) (4,2)

22 Root for a famous Argentinean, only more so? (5)

23 Tech company doesn't conclude, "I'm unable to get a job seeker" (9)

26 Captain of part of a sailboat, only more so? (6)

27 College figure backed learning method that includes animation art (7)

DOWN

1 Drink to exist, only more so? (4)

2 False lashes in drag (6)

3 Youngster found in County Kerry (4)

4 How you might order a Lyft, perhaps, when engulfed by endless change (1,2,5)

5 Raised net and racket—it is something that might affect a tennis player (10)

6 Building's pull, only more so? (5)

7 Deviant clones guarding against the source of your financial health (8)

8 Schoolroom item's times, only more so? (6)

12 Free marketeer with a rebellion brewing (10)

14 Outdoor atmosphere: Blonde gets hers messed up (5,3)

15 One's ABCs, reconsidered! (6)

16 Sue and I try terribly to swallow a bit of chicken stock, e.g. (8)

20 Shooter's cut, only more so? (6)

21 Pan cat, perhaps, only more so? (5)

24 Landing is irrational, only more so? (4)

25 Alternately, tax rates for painting, etc. (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3522

ACROSS **1** [V/a] IS A **3** anag.
10 SA + USAGE **11** REF + UTES
12 TITLER (anag.) + OLE **13** CH(OK)E
14 DETA(C)H (rev.) **16** R(ESON)ANT
(*ones* anag.) **18** KOLN + ID + RE
19 HYP[e] + HEN **22** PA + PAL
23 C(OLLEC)TOR (rev.) **25** anag.
26 S + EVENT + H **27** STA(B)LEMATE
28 F + OWL (&lit.)

DOWN **1** VI(SIT)ED **2** STUN + T
4 LIE + LOW **5** TARGE (anag.) + TED
6 anag. **7** O(STEOP)ATH (*poets* rev.)
8 anag. **9** TA + KEACH + ILL(P)ILL
15 TOLL + PLAZA **17** PROC (rev.) +
LAIM (anag.) **18** KO + PECKS
20 NAR(W + H)AL **21** AL(L)SET (*Tesla* rev.) **24** hidden

V	I	S	A	■	G	L	U	T	T	O	N	O	U	S
I	■	T	■	T	■	I	■	A	■	L	■	S	■	U
S	A	U	S	A	G	E	■	R	E	F	U	T	E	S
I	■	N	■	K	■	L	■	G	■	A	■	E	■	P
T	I	T	L	E	R	O	L	E	■	C	H	O	K	E
E	■	■	■	A	■	W	■	T	■	T	■	P	■	C
D	E	T	A	C	H	■	R	E	S	O	N	A	N	T
■	■	O	■	H	■	P	■	D	■	R	■	T	■	■
K	O	L	N	I	D	R	E	■	H	Y	P	H	E	N
O	■	L	■	L	■	O	■	A	■	N	■	■	■	A
P	A	P	A	L	■	C	O	L	L	E	C	T	O	R
E	■	L	■	P	■	L	■	L	■	R	■	O	■	W
C	Z	A	R	I	N	A	■	S	E	V	E	N	T	H
K	■	Z	■	L	■	I	■	E	■	E	■	T	■	A
S	T	A	B	L	E	M	A	T	E	■	F	O	W	L

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